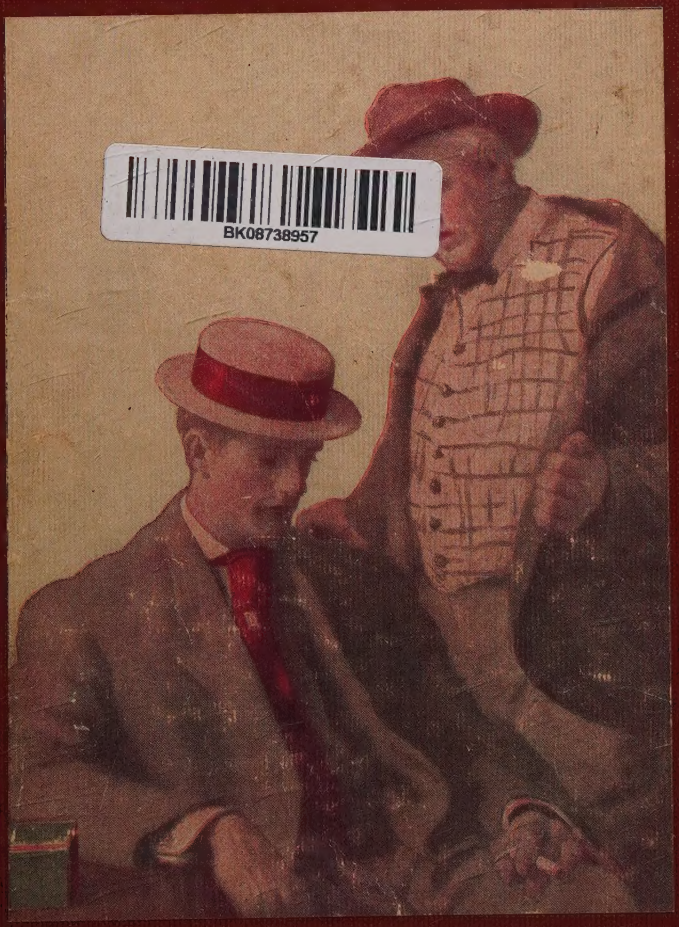
THE SECOND GENERATION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DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS

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The SECOND GENERATION

"'Father! What is it?' she repeated."

[Page 86]

The SECOND GENERATION

DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS

AUTHOR OF
"THE COST," "THE PLUM TREE," "THE SOCIAL SECRETARY," "THE DELUGE," ETC.

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THE SECOND GENERATION

CHAPTER I

"PUT YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER!"

N six minutes the noon whistle would blow. But the workmen—the seven hundred in the Ranger-Whitney flour mills, the two hundred and fifty in the Ranger-Whitney cooperage adjoining—were, every man and boy of them, as hard at it as if the dinner rest were hours away. On the threshold of the long room where several scores of filled barrels were being headed and stamped there suddenly appeared a huge figure, tall and broad and solid, clad in a working suit originally gray but now white with the flour dust that saturated the air, and coated walls and windows both within and without. At once each of the ninety-seven men and boys was aware of that presence and unconsciously showed it by putting on extra "steam." With swinging step the big figure crossed the packing room. The gray-white face held straight ahead, but the keen blue eyes paused upon each worker and each task. And every "hand" in those two great factories knew how all-seeing that glance was—critical, but just; exacting, but encouraging. All-seeing, in this instance, did not mean merely fault-seeing.

Hiram Ranger, manufacturing partner and controlling owner of the Ranger-Whitney Company of St. Christopher and Chicago, went on into the cooperage, leaving energy behind him, rousing it before him. Many times, each working day, between seven in the morning and six at night, he made the tour of those two establishments. A miller by inheritance and training, he had

learned the cooper's trade like any journeyman, when he decided that the company should manufacture its own barrels. He was not a rich man who was a manufacturer; he was a manufacturer who was incidentally rich—one who made of his business a vocation. He had no theories on the dignity of labor; he simply exemplified it, and would have been amazed, and amused or angered according to his mood, had it been suggested to him that useful labor is not as necessary and continuous a part of life as breathing. He did not speculate and talk about ideals; he lived them, incessantly and unconsciously. The talker of ideals and the liver of ideals get echo and response, each after his kind—the talker, in the empty noise of applause; the liver, in the silent spread of the area of achievement.

A moment after Hiram roused the packing room of the flour mill with the master's eye, he was in the cooperage, the center of a group round one of the hooping machines. It had got out of gear, and the workman had bungled in shutting off power; the result was chaos that threatened to stop the whole department for the rest of the day. Ranger brushed away the wrangling tinkerers and examined the machine. After grasping the problem in all its details, he threw himself flat upon his face, crawled under the machine, and called for a light. A moment later his voice issued again, in a call for a hammer. Several minutes of sharp hammering; then the mass of iron began to heave. It rose at the upward pressure of Ranger's powerful arms and legs, shoulders and back; it crashed over on its side; he stood up and, without pause or outward sign of his exertion of enormous strength, set about adjusting the gearing to action, with the broken machinery cut out. "And he past sixty!" muttered one workman to another, as a murmur of applause ran round the admiring circle. Clearly Hiram Ranger was master there not by reason of money but because he was first in brain and in brawn; not because he could hire but because he could direct and do.

In the front rank of the ring of on-looking workmen stood a young man, tall as himself and like him in the outline of his strong features, especially like him in the fine curve of the

prominent nose. But in dress and manner this young man was the opposite of the master workman now facing him in the dust and sweat of toil. He wore a fashionable suit of light gray tweed, a water-woven Panama with a wine-colored ribbon, a wine-colored scarf; several inches of wine-colored socks showed below his high-rolled, carefully creased trousers. There was a seal ring on the little finger of the left of a pair of large hands strong with the symmetrical strength which is got only at "polite" or useless exercise. Resting lightly between his lips was a big, expensive-looking Egyptian cigarette; the mingled odor of that and a delicate cologne scented the air. With a breeziness which a careful observer of the niceties of manner might have recognized as a disguise of nervousness, the young man advanced, extending his right hand.

"Hello, father!" said he, "I came to bring you home to lunch."

The master workman did not take the offered hand. After a quick glance of pride and pleasure which no father could have denied so manly and handsome a son, he eyed the young man with a look that bit into every one of his fashionable details. Presently he lifted his arm and pointed. The son followed the direction of that long, strong, useful-looking forefinger, until his gaze rested upon a sign: "No Smoking"—big, black letters on a white background.

"Beg pardon," he stammered, flushing and throwing away the cigarette.

The father went to the smoking butt and set his foot upon it. The son's face became crimson; he had flung the cigarette among the shavings which littered the floor. "The scientists say a fire can't be lighted from burning tobacco," he said, with a vigorous effort to repair the rent in his surface of easy assurance.

The old man—if that adjective can be justly applied to one who had such strength and energy as his—made no reply. He strode toward the door, the son following, acute to the grins and winks the workmen were exchanging behind his back. The father opened the shut street door of the cooperage, and, when

the son came up, pointed to the big, white letters: "No Admittance. Apply at the Office."

"How did you get in here?" he asked.

"I called in at the window and ordered one of the men to open the door," explained the son.

"Ordered." The father merely repeated the word.

"Requested, then," said the son, feeling that he was displaying praiseworthy patience with "the governor's" eccentricities.

"Which workman?"

The son indicated a man who was taking a dinner pail from under a bench at the nearest window. The father called to him: "Jerry!" Jerry came quickly.

"Why did you let this young—young *gentleman* in among us?"

"I saw it was Mr. Arthur," began Jerry.

"Then you saw it was not anyone who has any business here. Who gave you authority to suspend the rules of this factory?"

"Don't, father!" protested Arthur. "You certainly can't blame him. He knew I'd make trouble if he didn't obey."

"He knew nothing of the sort," replied Hiram Ranger. "I haven't been dealing with men for fifty years— However, next time you'll know what to do, Jerry."

"He warned me it was against the rules," interjected Arthur.

A triumphant smile gleamed in the father's eyes at this vindication of the discipline of the mills. "Then he knew he was doing wrong. He must be fined. You can pay the fine, young *gentleman*—if you wish."

"Certainly," murmured Arthur. "And now, let's go to lunch."

"To dinner," corrected the father; "your mother and I have dinner in the middle of the day, not lunch."

"To dinner, then. Anything you please, pa, only let's go."

When they were at the office and the father was about to enter the inner room to change his clothes, he wheeled,

and said: "Why ain't you at Harvard, passing your examinations?"

Arthur's hands contracted and his eyes shifted; in a tone to which repression gave a seeming lightness, he announced: "The exams. are over. I've been plucked."

The slang was new to Hiram Ranger, but he understood. In important matters his fixed habit was never to speak until he had thought well; without a word he turned and, with a heaviness that was new in his movements, went into the dressing room. The young man drew a cautious but profound breath of relief—the confession he had been dreading was over; his father knew the worst. "If the governor only knew the world better," he said to himself, "he'd know that at every college the best fellows always skate along the edge of the thin ice. But he doesn't, and so he thinks he's disgraced." He lit another cigarette by way of consolation and clarification.

When the father reappeared, dressed for the street, he was apparently unconscious of the cigarette. They walked home in silence—a striking-looking pair, with their great similar forms and their handsome similar faces, typical impersonations of the first generation that is sowing in labor, and the second generation that is reaping in idleness.

"Oh!" exclaimed Arthur, as they entered the Ranger place and began to ascend the stone walk through the lawns sloping down from the big, substantial-looking, creeper-clad house. "I stopped at Cleveland half a day, on the way West, and brought Adelaide along." He said this with elaborate carelessness; in fact, he had begged her to come that she might once more take her familiar and highly successful part of buffer between him and his father's displeasure.

The father's head lifted, and the cloud over his face also. "How is she?" he asked.

"Bang up!" answered Arthur. "She's the sort of a sister a man's proud of—looks and style, and the gait of a thoroughbred." He interrupted himself with a laugh. "There he is, now!" he exclaimed.

This was caused by the appearance, in the open front doors,

of a strange creature with a bright pink ribbon arranged as a sort of cockade around and above its left ear—a brown, hairy, unclean-looking thing that gazed with human inquisitiveness at the approaching figures. As the elder Ranger drew down his eyebrows the creature gave a squeak of alarm and, dropping from a sitting position to all fours, wheeled and shambled swiftly along the wide hall, walking human fashion with its hind feet, dog fashion with its fore feet or arms.

At first sight of this apparition Ranger halted. He stared with an expression so astounded that Arthur laughed outright. "What was that?" he now demanded.

"Simeon," replied Arthur. "Del has taken on a monk. It's the latest fad."

"Oh!" ejaculated Ranger. "Simeon."

"She named it after grandfather—and there *is* a—" Arthur stopped short. He remembered that "Simeon" was his father's father; perhaps his father might not see the joke. "That is," he explained, "she was looking for a name, and I thought of 'simian,' naturally, and that, of course, suggested 'Simeon'—and——"

"That'll do," said Hiram, in a tone of ominous calm which his family knew was the signal that a subject must be dropped.

Now there was a quick *froufrou* of skirts, and from the sitting room to the left darted a handsome, fair girl of nineteen, beautifully dressed in a gray summer silk with simple but effectively placed bands of pink embroidery on blouse and skirt. As she bounded down the steps and into her father's arms her flying skirts revealed a pair of long, narrow feet in stylish gray shoes and gray silk stockings exactly matching the rest of her costume. "Daddy! Daddy!" she cried.

His arms were trembling as they clasped her—were trembling with the emotion that surged into her eyes in the more obvious but less significant form of tears. "Glad to see you, Delia," was all he said.

She put her slim white forefinger on his lips.

He smiled. "Oh! I forgot. You're Adelaide, of course, since you've grown up."

"Why call me out of my name?" she demanded, gayly. "You should have christened me Delia if you had wanted me named that."

"I'll try to remember, next time," he said, meekly. His gray eyes were dancing and twinkling like sunbeams pouring from breaches in a spent storm-cloud; there was an eloquence of pleasure far beyond laughter's in the rare, infrequent eye smiles from his sober, strong face.

Now there was a squeaking and chattering behind them. Adelaide whirled free of her father's arms and caught up the monkey. "Put out your hand, sir," said she, and she kissed him. Her father shuddered, so awful was the contrast between the wizened, dirty-brown face and her roselike skin and fresh fairness. "Put out your hand and bow, sir," she went on. "This is Mr. Hiram Ranger, Mr. Simeon. Mr. Simeon, Mr. Ranger; Mr. Ranger, Mr. Simeon."

Hiram, wondering at his own weakness, awkwardly took the paw so uncannily like a mummied hand. "What did you do this for, Adelaide?" said he, in a tone of mild remonstrance where he had intended to be firm.

"He's so fascinating, I couldn't resist. He's so wonderfully human——"

"That's it," said her father; "so—so——"

"Loathsomely human," interjected Arthur.

"Loathsome," said the father.

"That impression soon wears off," assured Adelaide, "and he's just like a human being as company. I'd be bored to death if I didn't have him. He gives me an occupation."

At this the cloud settled on Ranger's face again—a cloud of sadness. An occupation!

Simeon hid his face in Adelaide's shoulder and began to whimper. She patted him softly. "How can you be so cruel?" she reproached her father. "He has feelings almost like a human being."

Ranger winced. Had the daughter not been so busy consoling her unhappy pet, the father's expression might have suggested to her that there was, not distant from her, a being who

had feelings, not almost, but quite human, and who might afford an occupation for an occupation-hunting young woman which might make love and care for a monkey superfluous. But he said nothing. He noted that the monkey's ribbon exactly matched the embroidery on Adelaide's dress.

"If he were a dog or a cat, you wouldn't mind," she went on.

True enough! Clearly, he was unreasonable with her.

"Do you want me to send him away?"

"I'll get used to him, I reckon," replied Hiram, adding, with a faint gleam of sarcasm, "I've got used to a great many things these last few years."

They went silently into the house, Adelaide and Arthur feeling that their father had quite unreasonably put a damper upon their spirits—a feeling which he himself had. He felt that he was right, and he was puzzled to find himself, even in his own mind, in the wrong.

"He's hopelessly old-fashioned!" murmured Arthur to his sister.

"Yes, but *such* a dear," murmured Adelaide.

"No wonder *you* say that!" was his retort. "You wind him round your finger."

In the sitting room—the "back parlor"—Mrs. Ranger descended upon them from the direction of the kitchen. Ellen was dressed for work; her old gingham, for all its neatness, was in as sharp contrast to her daughter's garb of the lady of leisure as were Hiram's mill clothes to his son's "London latest." "It's almost half-past twelve," she said. "Dinner's been ready more than half an hour. Mary's furious, and it's hard enough to keep servants in this town since the canning factories started."

Adelaide and Arthur laughed; Hiram smiled. They were all thoroughly familiar with that canning-factory theme. It constituted the chief feature of the servant problem in Saint X, as everybody called St. Christopher; and the servant problem there, as everywhere else, was the chief feature of domestic economy. As Mrs. Ranger's mind was concentrated upon her

household, the canning factories were under fire from her early and late, in season and out of season.

"And she's got to wait on the table, too," continued Ellen, too interested in reviewing her troubles to mind the amusement of the rest of the family.

"Why, where's the new girl Jarvis brought you?" asked Hiram.

"She came from way back in the country, and, when she set the table, she fixed five places. 'There's only four of us, Barbara,' said I. 'Yes, Mrs. Ranger,' says she, 'four and me.' 'But how're you going to wait on the table and sit with us?' says I, very kindly, for I step mighty soft with those people. 'Oh, I don't mind bouncin' up and down,' says she; 'I can chew as I walk round.' When I explained, she up and left in a huff. 'I'm as good as you are, Mrs. Ranger, I'd have you know,' she said, as she was going, just to set Mary afire; 'my father's an independent farmer, and I don't have to live out. I just thought I'd like to visit in town, and I'd heard your folks well spoke of. I'll get a place in the canning factory!' I wasn't sorry to have her go. You ought to have seen the way she set the table!"

"We'll have to get servants from the East," said Arthur. "They know their place a little better there. We can get some English that have just come over. They're the best—thoroughly respectful."

He did not see the glance his father shot at him from under his heavy eyebrows. But Adelaide did—she was expecting it. "Don't talk like a cad, Artie!" she said. "You know you don't think that way."

"Oh, of course, I don't admire that spirit—or lack of it," he replied. "But—what are you going to do? It's the flunkies or the Barbaras and Marys—or doing our own work."

To Hiram Ranger that seemed unanswerable, and his resentment against his son for expressing ideas for which he had utter contempt seemed unreasonable. Again reason put him in the wrong, though instinct was insisting that he was in the right.

"It's a pity people aren't contented in 'the station to which

God has called them,' as the English prayer book says," continued Arthur, not catching sensitive Adelaide's warning frown.

"If your mother and I had been content," said Hiram, "you and Delia would be looking for places in the canning factory." The remark was doubly startling—for the repressed energy of its sarcasm, and because, as a rule, Hiram never joined in the discussions in the family circle.

They were at the table, all except Mrs. Ranger. She had disappeared in the direction of the kitchen and presently reappeared bearing a soup tureen, which she set down before her husband. "I don't dare ask Mary to wait on the table," said she. "If I did, she's just in the humor to up and light out, too; and your mother's got no hankering for hanging over a hot stove in this weather."

She transferred the pile of soup plates from the sideboard and seated herself. Her husband poured the soup, and the plates were passed from hand to hand until all were served. "If the Sandyses could see us now, Del," said Arthur.

"Or the Whitneys," suggested Adelaide, and both laughed as people laugh when they think the joke, or the best part of it, is a secret between themselves.

Nothing more was said until the soup was finished and Mrs. Ranger rose and began to remove the dishes. Adelaide, gazing at the table, her thoughts far away, became uneasy, stirred, looked up; she saw that the cause of her uneasiness was the eyes of her father fixed steadily upon her in a look which she could not immediately interpret. When he saw that he had her attention, he glanced significantly toward her mother, waiting upon them. "If the Sandyses or the Whitneys could see us *now*!" he said.

She reddened, pushed back her chair, and sprang up. "Oh, I never thought!" she exclaimed. "Sit down, mother, and let *me* do that. You and father have got us into awful bad ways, always indulging us and waiting on us."

"You let me alone," replied her mother. "I'm used to it. I did my own work for fifteen years after we were married, and I'd have been doing it yet if your father hadn't just

gone out and got a girl and brought her in and set her to work. No; sit down, Del. You don't know anything about work. I didn't bring you up to be a household drudge."

But Del was on her way to the kitchen, whence she presently reappeared with a platter and a vegetable dish. Down the front of her skirt was a streak of grease. "There!" exclaimed Mrs. Ranger, coloring high with exasperation, "your dress is spoiled! I don't believe I can take it out of that kind of goods without leaving a spot. Hiram, I do wish you wouldn't meddle with the children! It seems to me you've got enough to do to 'tend your own affairs at the mill."

This was unanswerable, or so it seemed to her husband. Once more he felt in the wrong, when he knew that, somehow, he was in the right.

But Adelaide was laughing and going forward gracefully with her duties as waitress. "It's nothing," she said; "the stain will come out; and, if it doesn't, there's no harm done. The dress is an old thing. I've worn it until everybody's sick of the sight of it."

Mrs. Ranger now took her turn at looking disapproval. She exclaimed: "Why, the dress is as good as new; much too good to travel in. You ought to have worn a linen duster over it on the train."

At this even Hiram showed keen amusement, and Mrs. Ranger herself joined in the laugh. "Well, it was a good, sensible fashion, anyhow," said she.

Instead of hurrying through dinner to get back to his work with the one o'clock whistle, Hiram Ranger lingered on, much to the astonishment of his family. When the faint sound of the whistles of the distant factories was borne to them through the open windows, Mrs. Ranger cried, "You'll be late, father."

"I'm in no hurry to-day," said Ranger, rousing from the seeming abstraction in which he passed most of his time with his assembled family. After dinner he seated himself on the front porch. Adelaide came up behind and put her arm round his neck. "You're not feeling well, daddy?"

"Not extra," he answered. "But it's nothing to bother

about. I thought I'd rest a few minutes." He patted her in shy expression of gratitude for her little attention. It is not strange that Del overvalued the merit of these trivial attentions of hers when they were valued thus high by her father, who longed for proofs of affection and, because of his shyness and silence, got few.

"Hey, Del! Hurry up! Get into your hat and dust-coat!" was now heard, in Arthur's voice, from the drive to the left of the lawns.

Hiram's glance shifted to the direction of the sound. Arthur was perched high in a dogcart to which were attached two horses, one before the other. Adelaide did not like to leave her father with that expression on his face, but after a brief hesitation she went into the house. Hiram advanced slowly across the lawn toward the tandem. When he had inspected it in detail, at close range, he said: "Where'd you get it, young gentleman?" Again there was stress on the "gentleman."

"Oh, I've had it at Harvard several months," he replied carelessly. "I shipped it on. I sold the horses—got a smashing good price for 'em. Yours ain't used to tandem, but I guess I can manage 'em."

"That style of hitching's new to these parts," continued Hiram.

Arthur felt the queerness of his father's tone. "Two, side by side, or two, one in front of the other—where's the difference?"

True, reflected Hiram. He was wrong again—yet again unconvinced. Certainly the handsome son, so smartly gotten up, seated in this smart trap, did look attractive—but somehow not as he would have had *his* son look. Adelaide came; he helped her to the lower seat. As he watched them dash away, as fine-looking a pair of young people as ever gladdened a father's eye, this father's heart lifted with pride—but sank again. Everything *seemed* all right; why, then, did everything *feel* all wrong?

"I'm not well to-day," he muttered. He returned to the

porch, walking heavily. In body and in mind he felt listless. There seemed to be something or some one inside him—a newcomer—aloof from all that he had regarded as himself—aloof from his family, from his work, from his own personality—an outsider, studying the whole perplexedly and gloomily.

As he was leaving the gate a truck entered the drive. It was loaded with trunks—his son's and his daughter's baggage on the way from the station. Hiram paused and counted the boxes—five huge trunks—Adelaide's beyond doubt; four smaller ones, six of steamer size and thereabouts—profuse and elegant Arthur's profuse and elegant array of canvas and leather. This mass of superfluity seemed to add itself to his burden. He recalled what his wife had once said when he hesitated over some new extravagance of the children's: "What'd we toil and save for, unless to give them a better time than we had? What's the use of our having money if they can't enjoy it?" A "better time," "enjoy"—they sounded all right, but were they *really* all right? Was this really a "better time"?—really enjoyment? Were his and his wife's life all wrong, except as they had contributed to this new life of thoughtless spending and useless activity and vanity and splurge?

Instead of going toward the factories, he turned east and presently out of Jefferson Street into Elm. He paused at a two-story brick house painted brown, with a small but brilliant and tasteful garden in front and down either side. To the right of the door was an unobtrusive black-and-gold sign bearing the words "Ferdinand Schulze, M.D." He rang, was admitted by a pretty, plump, Saxon-blond young woman—the doctor's younger daughter and housekeeper. She looked freshly clean and wholesome—and so useful! Hiram's eyes rested upon her approvingly; and often afterwards his thoughts returned to her, lingering upon her and his own daughter in that sort of vague comparisons which we would not entertain were we aware of them.

Dr. Schulze was the most distinguished—indeed, the only distinguished—physician in Saint X. He was a short, stout, grizzled, spectacled man, with a nose like a scarlet button and

a mouth like a buttonhole; in speech he was abrupt, and, on the slightest pretext or no pretext at all, sharp; he hid a warm sympathy for human nature, especially for its weaknesses, behind an uncompromising candor which he regarded as the duty of the man of science toward a vain and deluded race that knew little and learned reluctantly. A man is either better or worse than the manner he chooses for purposes of conciliating or defying the world. Dr. Schulze was better, as much better as his mind was superior to his body. He and his motherless daughters were "not in it" socially. Saint X was not quite certain whether it shunned them or they it. His services were sought only in extremities, partly because he would lie to his patients neither when he knew what ailed them nor when he did not, and partly because he was a militant infidel. He lost no opportunity to attack religion in all its forms; and his two daughters let no opportunity escape to show that they stood with their father, whom they adored, and who had brought them up with his heart. It was Dr. Schulze's furious unbelief, investing him with a certain suggestion of Satan-got intelligence, that attracted Saint X to him in serious illnesses—somewhat as the Christian princes of mediæval Europe tolerated and believed in the Jew physicians. Saint X was only just reaching the stage at which it could listen to "higher criticism" without dread lest the talk should be interrupted by a bolt from "special Providence"; the fact that Schulze lived on, believing and talking as he did, could be explained only as miraculous and mysterious forbearance in which Satan must somehow have direct part.

"I didn't expect to see *you* for many a year yet," said Schulze, as Hiram, standing, faced him sitting at his desk.

The master workman grew still more pallid as he heard the thought that weighted him in secret thus put into words. "I have never had a doctor before in my life," said he. "My prescription has been, when you feel badly stop eating and work harder."

"Starve and sweat—none better," said Schulze. "Well, why do you come here to-day?"

"This morning I lifted a rather heavy weight. I've felt a kind of tiredness ever since, and a pain in the lower part of my back—pretty bad. I can't understand it."

"But I can—that's my business. Take off your clothes and stretch yourself on this chair. Call me when you're ready."

Schulze withdrew into what smelled like a laboratory. Hiram could hear him rattling glass against glass and metal, could smell the fumes of uncorked bottles of acids. When he called, Schulze reappeared, disposed instruments and tubes upon a table. "I never ask my patients questions," he said, as he began to examine Hiram's chest. "I lay 'em out here and go over 'em inch by inch. I find all the weak spots, both those that are crying out and those worse ones that don't. I never ask a man what's the matter; I tell him. And my patients, and all the fools in this town, think I'm in league with the devil. A doctor who finds out what's the matter with a man Providence is trying to lay in the grave—what can it be but the devil?"

He had reached his subject; as he worked he talked it—religion, its folly, its silliness, its cruelty, its ignorance, its viciousness. Hiram listened without hearing; he was absorbed in observing the diagnosis. He knew nothing of medicine, but he did know good workmanship. As the physician worked, his admiration and confidence grew. He began to feel better—not physically better, but that mental relief which a courageous man feels when the peril he is facing is stripped of the mystery that made it a terror. After perhaps three quarters of an hour, Schulze withdrew to the laboratory, saying: "That's all. You may dress."

Hiram dressed, seated himself. By chance he was opposite a huge image from the Orient, a hideous, twisted thing with a countenance of sardonic sagacity. As he looked he began to see perverse, insidious resemblances to the physician himself. When Schulze reappeared and busied himself writing, he looked from the stone face to the face of flesh with fascinated repulsion—the man and the "familiar" were so ghastly alike.

Then he suddenly understood that this was a quaint double jest of the eccentric physician's—his grim fling at his lack of physical charm, his ironic jeer at the superstitions of Saint X.

"There!" said Schulze, looking up. "That's the best I can do for you."

"What's the matter with me?"

"You wouldn't know if I told you."

"Is it serious?"

"In this world everything is serious—and nothing."

"Will I die?"

Schulze slowly surveyed all Hiram's outward signs of majesty that had been denied his own majestic intellect, noted the tremendous figure, the shoulders, the forehead, the massive brow and nose and chin—an *ensemble* of unabused power, the handiwork of Nature at her best, a creation worth while, worth preserving intact and immortal.

"Yes," he answered, with satiric bitterness; "you will have to die, and rot, just like the rest of us."

"Tell me!" Hiram commanded. "Will I die soon?"

Schulze reflected, rubbing his red-button nose with his stubby fingers. When he spoke, his voice had a sad gentleness. "You can bear hearing it. You have the right to know." He leaned back, paused, said in a low tone: "Put your house in order, Mr. Ranger."

Hiram's steadfast gray eyes met bravely the eyes of the man who had just read him his death warrant. A long pause; then Hiram said "Thank you," in his quiet, calm way.

He took the prescriptions, went out into the street. It looked strange to him; he felt like a stranger in that town where he had spent half a century—felt like a temporary tenant of that vast, strong body of his which until now had seemed himself. And he—or was it the stranger within him?—kept repeating: "Put your house in order. Put your house in order."

CHAPTER II

OF SOMEBODIES AND NOBODIES

AT the second turning Arthur rounded the tandem out of Jefferson street into Willow with a skill that delighted both him and his sister. "But why go that way?" said she. "Why not through Monroe street? I'm sure the horses would behave."

"Better not risk it," replied Arthur, showing that he, too, had had, but had rejected, the temptation to parade the crowded part of town. "Even if the horses didn't act up, the people might, they're such jays."

Adelaide's estimate of what she and her brother had acquired in the East was as high as was his, and she had the same unflattering opinion of those who lacked it. But it ruffled her to hear him call the home folks jays—just as it would have ruffled him had she been the one to make the slighting remark. "If you invite people's opinion," said she, "you've no right to sneer at them because they don't say what you wanted."

"But *I'm* not driving for show if *you* are," he retorted, with a testiness that was confession.

"Don't be silly," was her answer. "You know you wouldn't take all this trouble on a desert island."

"Of course not," he admitted, "but I don't care for the opinion of any but those capable of appreciating."

"And those capable of appreciating are only those who approve," teased Adelaide. "Why drive tandem among these 'jays?'"

"To keep my hand in," replied he; and his adroit escape restored his good humor.

"I wish I were as free from vanity as you are, Arthur, dear," said she.

"You're just as fond of making a sensation as I am," replied he. "And, my eye, Del! but you *do* know how." This with an admiring glance at her most becoming hat with its great, gracefully draped *chiffon* veil, and at her dazzling white dust-coat with its deep blue facings that matched her eyes.

She laughed. "Just wait till you see my new dresses—and hats."

"Another shock for your poor father."

"Shock of joy."

"Yes," assented Arthur, rather glumly; "he'll take anything off you. But when I——"

"It's no compliment to me," she cut in, the prompter to admit the truth because it would make him feel better. "He thinks I'm 'only a woman,' fit for nothing but to look pretty as long as I'm a girl, and then to devote myself to a husband and children, without any life or even ideas of my own."

"Mother always seems cheerful enough," said Arthur. His content with the changed conditions which the prosperity and easy-going generosity of the elder generation were making for the younger generation ended at his own sex. The new woman—idle and frivolous, ignorant of all useful things, fit only for the show side of life and caring only for it, discontented with everybody but her own selfish self—Arthur had a reputation among his friends for his gloomy view of the American woman and for his courage in expressing it.

"You are *so* narrow-minded, Artie!" his sister exclaimed impatiently. "Mother was brought up very differently from the way she and father have brought me up——"

"Have let you bring yourself up."

"No matter; I *am* different."

"But what would you do? What can a woman do?"

"I don't know," she admitted. "But I *do* know I hate a humdrum life." There was the glint of the Ranger will in her eyes as she added: "Furthermore, I shan't stand for it."

He looked at her enviously. "You'll be free in another

year," he said. "You and Ross Whitney will marry, and you'll have a big house in Chicago and can do what you please and go where you please."

"Not if Ross should turn out to be the sort of man you are."

He laughed. "I can see Ross—or any man—trying to manage *you*! You've got too much of father in you."

"But I'll be dependent until—" Adelaide paused, then added a satisfactorily vague, "for a long time. Father won't give me anything. How furious he'd be at the very suggestion of dowry. Parents out here don't appreciate that conditions have changed and that it's necessary nowadays for a woman to be independent of her husband."

Arthur compressed his lips, to help him refrain from comment. But he felt so strongly on the subject that he couldn't let her remarks pass unchallenged. "I don't know about that, Del," he said. "It depends on the woman. Personally, I'd hate to be married to a woman I couldn't control if necessary."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," cried Del, indignant. "Is *that* your idea of control—to make a woman mercenary and hypocritical? You'd better change your way of thinking if you don't want Janet to be very unhappy, and yourself, too."

"That sounds well," he retorted, "but you know better. Take our case, for instance. Is it altogether love and affection that make us so cautious about offending father?"

"Speak for yourself," said Adelaide. "*I*'m not cautious."

"Do try to argue fair, even if you are a woman. You're as cautious in your way as I am in mine."

Adelaide felt that he was offended, and justly. "I didn't mean quite what I said, Artie. You *are* cautious, in a way, and sometimes. But often you're reckless. I'm frightened every once in a while by it, and I'm haunted by the dread that there'll be a collision between father and you. You're so much alike, and you understand each other less and less, all the time."

After a silence Arthur said, thoughtfully: "I think I understand him. There are two distinct persons inside of me. There's the one that was made by inheritance and by my surroundings as a boy—the one that's like him, the one that enables me to understand him. Then, there's this other that's been made since—in the East, and going round among people that either never knew the sort of life we had as children or have grown away from it. The problem is how to reconcile those two persons so that they'll stop wrangling and shaming each other. "That's *my* problem, I mean. Father's problem— He doesn't know he has one. I must do as he wishes or I'll not be at all, so far as he is concerned."

Another and longer silence; then Adelaide, after an uneasy, affectionate look at his serious profile, said: "I'm often ashamed of myself, Artie—about father; I don't *think* I'm a hypocrite, for I do love him dearly. Who could help it, when he is so indulgent and when even in his anger he's kind? But you—Oh, Artie, even though you are less, much less, uncandid with him than I am, still isn't it more—more—less manly in you? After all, I'm a woman and helpless; and, if I seriously offend him, what would become of me? But you're a man. The world was made for men; they can make their own way. And it seems unworthy of you to be afraid to be yourself before *any*body. And I'm sure it's demoralizing."

She spoke so sincerely that he could not have resented it, even had her words raised a far feebler echo within him. "I don't honestly believe, Del, that my caution with father is from fear of his shutting down on me, any more than yours is," he replied. "I know he cares for me. And often I don't let him see me as I am simply because it'd hurt him if he knew how differently I think and feel about a lot of things."

"But are you right?—or is he?"

Arthur did not answer immediately. He had forgotten his horses; they were jogging along, heads down and "form" gone. "What do *you* think?" he finally asked.

"I—I can't quite make up my mind."

"Do you think I ought to drudge and slave, as he has?

Do you think I ought to spend my life in making money, in dealing in flour? Isn't there something better than that?"

"I don't think it's what a man deals in; I think it's *how* he deals. And I don't believe there's any sort of man finer and better than father, Arthur."

"That's true," he assented warmly. "I used to envy the boys at college—some of them—because their fathers and mothers had so much culture and knowledge of the world. But when I came to know their parents better—and them, too —I saw how really ignorant and vulgar—yes, vulgar—they were, under their veneer of talk and manner which they thought was everything. 'They may be fit to stand before kings,' I said to myself, 'but my father *is* a king—and of a sort they ain't fit to stand before.'"

The color was high in Del's cheeks and her eyes were brilliant. "You'll come out all right, Artie," said she. "I don't know just how, but you'll *do* something, and do it well."

"I'd much rather do nothing—well," said he lightly, as if not sure whether he was in earnest or not. "It's so much nicer to dream than to do." He looked at her with good-humored satire. "And you—what's the matter with your practising some of the things you preach? Why don't you marry—say, Dory Hargrave, instead of Ross?"

She made a failure of a stout attempt to meet his eyes and to smile easily. "Because I don't love Dory Hargrave," she said.

"But you wouldn't let yourself if you could—would you, now?"

"It's a poor love that lags for let," she replied. "Besides, why talk about me? I'm 'only a woman.' I haven't any career, or any chance to make one."

"But you might help some man," he teased.

"Then you'd like me to marry Dory—if I could?"

"I'm just showing you how vain your theorizing is," was his not altogether frank reply. "You urge me to despise money when you yourself——"

"That isn't fair, Arthur. If I didn't care for Ross I shouldn't think of marrying him, and you know it."

"He's so like father!" mocked Arthur.

"No, but he's so like *you*," she retorted. "You know he was your ideal for years. It was your praising him that—that first made me glad to do as father and mother wished. You know father approves of him."

Arthur grinned, and Del colored. "A lot father knows about Ross as he really is," said he. "Oh, he's clever about what he lets father see. However, you do admit there's some other ideal of man than successful workingman."

"Of course!" said Adelaide. "I'm not so silly and narrow as you try to make out. Only, I prefer a combination of the two. And I think Ross is that, and I hope and believe he'll be more so—afterwards."

Adelaide's tone was so judicial that Arthur thought it discreet not to discuss his friend and future brother-in-law further. "He isn't good enough for Del," he said to himself. "But, then, who is? And he'll help her to the sort of setting she's best fitted for. What side they'll put on, once they get going! She'll set a new pace—and it'll be a grand one."

At the top of the last curve in the steep road up from Deer Creek the horses halted of themselves to rest; Arthur and his sister gazed out upon the vast, dreamy vision—miles on miles of winding river shimmering through its veil of silver mist, stately hills draped in gauziest blue. It was such uplifting vistas that inspired the human imagination, in the days of its youth, to breathe a soul into the universe and make it a living thing, palpitant with love and hope; it was an outlook that would have moved the narrowest, the smallest, to think in the wide and the large. Wherever the hills were not based close to the water's edge or rose less abruptly, there were cultivated fields; and in each field, far or near, men were at work. These broad-hatted, blue-shirted toilers in the ardent sun determined the turn of Adelaide's thoughts.

"It doesn't seem right, does it," said she, "that so many—almost everybody—should have to work so hard just to get

enough to eat and to wear and a place to sleep, when there's so much of everything in the world—and when a few like us don't have to work at all and have much more than they need, simply because one happened to be born in such or such conditions. I suppose it's got to be so, but it certainly looks unjust —and silly."

"I'm not sure the workers haven't the best of it," replied Arthur. "They have the dinner; we have only the dessert; and I guess one gets tired of only desserts, no matter how great the variety."

"It's a stupid world in lots of ways, isn't it?"

"Not so stupid as it used to be, when everybody said and thought it was as good as possible," replied he. "You see, it's the people in the world that make it stupid. For instance, do you suppose you and I, or anybody, would care for idling about and doing all sorts of things our better judgment tells us are inane, if it weren't that most of our fellow-beings are stupid enough to admire and envy that sort of thing, and that we are stupid enough to want to be admired and envied by stupid people?"

"Did you notice the Sandys's English butler?" asked Adelaide.

"*Did* I? I'll bet he keeps every one in the Sandys family up to the mark."

"That's it," continued Adelaide. "He's a poor creature, dumb and ignorant. He knows only one thing—snobbishness. Yet every one of us was in terror of his opinion. No doubt kings feel the same way about the people around them. Always what's expected of us—and by whom? Why, by people who have little sense and less knowledge. They run the world, don't they?"

"As Dory Hargrave says," said her brother, "the only scheme for making things better that's worth talking about is raising the standards of the masses because their standards are ours. We'll be fools and unjust as long as they'll let us. And they'll let us as long as they're ignorant."

By inheritance Arthur and Adelaide had excellent minds,

shrewd and with that cast of humor which makes for justice of judgment by mocking at the solemn frauds of interest and prejudice. But, as is often the case with the children of the rich and the well-to-do, there had been no necessity for either to use intellect; their parents and hirelings of various degrees, paid with their father's generously given money, had done their thinking for them. The whole of animate creation is as lazy as it dares be, and man is no exception. Thus, the Ranger children, like all other normal children of luxury, rarely made what would have been, for their fallow minds, the arduous exertion of real thinking. When their minds were not on pastimes or personalities they were either rattling round in their heads or exchanging the ideas, real and reputed, that happened to be drifting about, at the moment, in their "set." Those ideas they and their friends received, and stored up or passed on with never a thought as to whether they were true or false, much as they used coins or notes they took in and paid out. Arthur and Adelaide soon wearied of their groping about in the mystery of human society—how little direct interest it had for them then! They drove on; the vision which had stimulated them to think vanished; they took up again those personalities about friends, acquaintances and social life that are to thinking somewhat as massage is to exercise—all the motions of real activity, but none of its spirit. They stopped for two calls and tea on the fashionable Bluffs.

When they reached home, content with tandem, drive, themselves, their friends, and life in general, they found Hiram Ranger returned from work, though it was only half-past five, and stretched on the sofa in the sitting room, with his eyes shut. At this unprecedented spectacle of inactivity they looked at each other in vague alarm; they were stealing away, when he called: "I'm not asleep."

His expression made Adelaide impulsively kneel beside him and gaze anxiously into his face. He smiled, roused himself to a sitting posture, well concealing the effort the exertion cost him.

"Your father's getting old," he said, hiding his tragedy of

aching body and aching heart and impending doom in a hypocrisy of cheerfulness that would have passed muster even had he not been above suspicion. "I'm not up to the mark of the last generation. Your grandfather was fifty when I was born, and he didn't die till I was fifty."

His face shadowed; Adelaide, glancing round for the cause, saw Simeon, half-sitting, half-standing in the doorway, humble apology on his weazened, whiskered face. He looked so like her memory-picture of her grandfather that she burst out laughing. "Don't be hard on the poor old gentleman, father," she cried. "How can you resist that appeal? Tell him to come in and make himself at home."

As her father did not answer, she glanced at him. He had not heard her; he was staring straight ahead with an expression of fathomless melancholy. The smile faded from her face, from her heart, as the light fades before the oncoming shadow of night. Presently he was absent-mindedly but tenderly stroking her hair, as if he were thinking of her so intensely that he had become unconscious of her physical presence. The apparition of Simeon had set him to gathering in gloomy assembly a vast number of circumstances about his two children; each circumstance was so trivial in itself that by itself it seemed foolishly inconsequential; yet, in the mass, they bore upon his heart, upon his conscience, so heavily that his very shoulders stooped with the weight. "Put your house in order," the newcomer within him was solemnly warning; and Hiram was puzzling over his meaning, was dreading what that meaning might presently reveal itself to be. "Put my house in order?" muttered Hiram, an inquiring echo of that voice within.

"What did you say, father?" asked Adelaide, timidly laying her hand on his arm. Though she knew he was simple, she felt the vastness in him that was awe-inspiring—just as a mountain or an ocean, a mere aggregation of simple matter, is in the total majestic and incomprehensible. Beside him, the complex little individualities among her acquaintances seemed like the acrostics of a children's puzzle column.

"Leave me with your brother awhile," he said.

She glanced quickly, furtively at Arthur and admired his self-possession—for she knew his heart must be heavier than her own. She rose from her knees, laid her hand lingeringly, appealingly upon her father's broad shoulder, then slowly left the room. Simeon, forgotten, looked up at her and scratched his head; he turned in behind her, caught the edge of her skirt and bore it like a queen's page.

The son watched the father, whose powerful features were set in an expression that seemed stern only because his eyes were hid, gazing steadily at the floor. It was the father who broke the silence. "What do you calculate to do—now?"

"Tutor this summer and have another go at those exams. in September. I'll have no trouble in rejoining my class. I sailed just a little too close to the wind—that's all."

"What does that mean?" inquired the father. College was a mystery to him, a deeply respected mystery. He had been the youngest of four sons. Their mother's dream was the dream of all the mothers of those pioneer and frontier days —to send her sons to college. Each son in turn had, with her assistance, tried to get together the sum—so small, yet so hugely large—necessary to make the start. But fate, now as sickness, now as crop failure, now as flood, and again as war, had been too strong for them. Hiram had come nearest, and his defeat had broken his mother's heart and almost broken his own. It was therefore with a sense of prying into hallowed mysteries that he began to investigate his son's college career.

"Well, you know," Arthur proceeded to explain, "there are five grades—A, B, C, D, and E. I aimed for C, but several things came up—interfered—and I—just missed D."

"Is C the highest?"

Arthur smiled faintly. "Well—not in one sense. It's what's called the gentleman's grade. All the fellows that are the right sort are in it—or in D."

"And what did *you* get?"

"I got E. That means I have to try again."

Hiram began to understand. So *this* was the hallowed mystery of higher education. He was sitting motionless, his

elbows on his knees, his big chest and shoulders inclined forward, his gaze fixed upon a wreath of red roses in the pattern of the moquette carpet—that carpet upon which Adelaide, backed by Arthur, had waged vain war as the worst of the many, to cultured nerves, trying exhibitions of "primitive taste" in Ellen's best rooms. When Hiram spoke his lips barely opened and his voice had no expression. His next question was: "What does A mean?"

"The A men are those that keep their noses in their books. They're a narrow set—have no ideas—think the book side is the only side of a college education."

"Then you don't go to college to learn what's in the books?"

"Oh, of course, the books are part of it. But the real thing is association—the friendships one makes, the knowledge of human nature and of—of life."

"What does that mean?"

Arthur had been answering Hiram's questions in a flurry, though he had been glib enough. He had had no fear that his father would appreciate that he was getting half-truths, or, rather, truths prepared skillfully for paternal consumption; his flurry had come from a sense that he was himself not doing quite the manly, the courageous thing. Now, however, something in the tone of the last question, or, perhaps, some element that was lacking, roused in him a suspicion of depth in his simple unworldly father; and swift upon this awakening came a realization that he was floundering in that depth—and in grave danger of submersion. He shifted nervously when his father, without looking up and without putting any expression into his voice, repeated: "What do you mean by associations—and life—and—all that?"

"I can't explain exactly," replied Arthur. "It would take a long time."

"I haven't asked you to be brief."

"I can't put it into words."

"Why not?"

"You would misunderstand."

"Why?"

Arthur made no reply.

"Then you can't tell me what you go to college for?"

Again the young man looked perplexedly at his father. There was no anger in that tone—no emotion of any kind. But what was the meaning of the *look,* the look of a sorrow that was tragic?

"I know you think I've disgraced you, father, and myself," said Arthur. "But it isn't so—really, it isn't. No one, not even the faculty, thinks the less of me. This sort of thing often occurs in our set."

"Your 'set'?"

"Among the fellows I travel with. They're the nicest men in Harvard. They're in all the best clubs—and lead in supporting the athletics and—and—their fathers are among the richest, the most distinguished men in the country. There are only about twenty or thirty of us, and we make the pace for the whole show—the whole university, I mean. Everybody admires and envies us—wants to be in our set. Even the grinds look up to us, and imitate us as far as they can. We give the tone to the university!"

"What is 'the tone'?"

Again Arthur shifted uneasily. "It's hard to explain that sort of thing. It's a sort of—of manner. It's knowing how to do the—the right sort of thing."

"What is the right sort of thing?"

"I can't put it into words. It's what makes you look at one man and say, 'He's a gentleman'; and look at another and see that he isn't."

"What is a 'gentleman'—at Harvard?"

"Just what it is anywhere."

"What is it anywhere?"

Again Arthur was silent.

"Then there are only twenty or thirty gentlemen at Harvard? And the catalogue says there are three thousand or more students."

"Oh—of course," began Arthur. But he stopped short.

How could he make his father, ignorant of "the world" and dominated by primitive ideas, understand the Harvard ideal? So subtle and evanescent, so much a matter of the most delicate shadings was this ideal that he himself often found the distinction quite hazy between it and that which looked disquietingly like "tommy rot."

"And these gentlemen—these here friends of yours—your 'set,' as you call 'em—what are they aiming for?"

Arthur did not answer. It would be hopeless to try to make Hiram Ranger understand, still less tolerate, an ideal of life that was elegant leisure, the patronage of literature and art, music, the drama, the turf, and the pursuit of culture and polite extravagance, wholly aloof from the frenzied and vulgar jostling of the market place.

With a mighty heave of the shoulders which, if it had found outward relief, would have been a sigh, Hiram Ranger advanced to the hard part of the first task which the mandate, "Put your house in order," had set for him. He took from the inside pocket of his coat a small bundle of papers, the records of Arthur's college expenses. The idea of accounts with his children had been abhorrent to him. The absolute necessity of business method had forced him to make some records, and these he had expected to destroy without anyone but himself knowing of their existence. But in the new circumstances he felt he must not let his own false shame push the young man still farther from the right course. Arthur watched him open each paper in the bundle slowly, spread it out and, to put off the hateful moment for speech, pretend to peruse it deliberately before laying it on his knee; and, dim though the boy's conception of his father was, he did not misjudge the feelings behind that painful reluctance. Hiram held the last paper in a hand that trembled. He coughed, made several attempts to speak, finally began: "Your first year at Harvard, you spent seventeen hundred dollars. Your second year, you spent fifty-three hundred. Last year— Are all your bills in?"

"There are a few—" murmured Arthur.

"How much?"

He flushed hotly.

"Don't you know?" With this question his father lifted his eyes without lifting his shaggy eyebrows.

"About four or five thousand—in all—including the tailors and other tradespeople."

A pink spot appeared in the left cheek of the old man—very bright against the gray-white of his skin. Somehow, he did not like that word "tradespeople," though it seemed harmless enough. "This last year, the total was," said he, still monotonously, "ninety-eight hundred odd—if the bills I haven't got yet ain't more than five thousand."

"A dozen men spend several times that much," protested Arthur.

"What for?" inquired Hiram.

"Not for dissipation, father," replied the young man, eagerly. "Dissipation is considered bad form in our set."

"What do you mean by dissipation?"

"Drinking—and—all that sort of thing," Arthur replied. "It's considered ungentlemanly, nowadays—drinking to excess, I mean."

"What do you spend the money for?"

"For good quarters and pictures, and patronizing the sports, and club dues, and entertainments, and things to drive in—for living as a man should."

"You've spent a thousand, three hundred dollars for tutoring since you've been there."

"Everybody has to do tutoring—more or less."

"What did you do with the money you made?"

"What money, father?"

"The money you made tutoring. You said everybody had to do tutoring. I suppose you did your share."

Arthur did not smile at this "ignorance of the world"; he grew red, and stammered: "Oh, I meant everybody in our set employs tutors."

"Then who does the tutoring? Who're the nobodies that tutor the everybodies?"

Arthur grew cold, then hot. He was cornered, therefore

roused. He stood, leaned against the table, faced his father defiantly. "I see what you're driving at, father," he said. "You feel I've wasted time and money at college, because I haven't lived like a dog and grubbed in books day in and day out, and filled my head with musty stuff; because I've tried to get what I believe to be the broadest knowledge and experience; because I've associated with the best men, the fellows that come from the good families. You accept the bluff the faculty puts up of pretending the A fellows are really the A fellows, when, in fact, everybody there and all the graduates and everyone everywhere who knows the world knows that the fellows in our set are the ones the university is proud of—the fellows with manners and appearance and——"

"The gentlemen," interjected the father, who had not changed either his position or his expression.

"Yes—the gentlemen!" exclaimed Arthur. "There are other ideals of life besides buying and selling."

"And working?" suggested Hiram.

"Yes—and what you call working," retorted Arthur, angry through and through. "You sent me East to college to get the education of a man in my position."

"What is your position?" inquired Hiram—simply an inquiry.

"Your son," replied the young man; "trying to make the best use of the opportunities you've worked so hard to get for me. I'm not you, father. You'd despise me if I didn't have a character, an individuality, of my own. Yet, because I can't see life as you see it, you are angry with me."

For answer Hiram only heaved his great shoulders in another suppressed sigh. He *knew* profoundly that he was right, yet his son's plausibilities—they could only be plausibilities—put him clearly in the wrong. "We'll see," he said; "we'll see. You're wrong in thinking I'm angry, boy." He was looking at his son now, and his eyes made his son's passion vanish. He got up and went to the young man and laid his hand on his shoulder in a gesture of affection that moved the son the more profoundly because it was unprecedented. "If there's been any

wrong done," said the old man—and he looked very, very old now—" I've done it. I'm to blame—not you."

A moment after Hiram left the room, Adelaide hurried in. A glance at her brother reassured her. They stood at the window watching their father as he walked up and down the garden, his hands behind his back, his shoulders stooped, his powerful head bent.

" Was he very angry? " asked Del.

" He wasn't angry at all," her brother replied. " I'd much rather he had been." Then, after a pause, he added: " I thought the trouble between us was that, while I understood him, he didn't understand me. Now I know that he has understood me but that I don't understand him "—and, after a pause—" or myself."

CHAPTER III

MRS. WHITNEY INTERVENES

S Hiram had always been silent and seemingly abstracted, no one but Ellen noted the radical change in him. She had brought up her children in the old-fashioned way—her thoughts, and usually her eyes, upon them all day, and one ear open all night. When she no longer had them to guard, she turned all this energy of solicitude to her husband; thus the passionate love of her youth was having a healthy, beautiful old age. The years of circumventing the easily roused restiveness of her spirited boy and girl had taught her craft; without seeming to be watching Hiram, no detail of his appearance or actions escaped her.

"There's mighty little your pa don't see," had been one of her stock observations to the children from their earliest days. "And you needn't flatter yourselves he don't care because he don't speak." Now she noted that from under his heavy brows his eyes were looking stealthily out, more minutely observant than ever before, and that what he saw either added to his sadness or took a color of sadness from his mood. She guessed that the actions of Adelaide and Arthur, so utterly different from the actions of the children of her and Hiram's young days—except those regarded by all worth-while people as "trifling and trashy"—had something to do with Hiram's gloom. She decided that Arthur's failure and his lightness of manner in face of it were the chief trouble—this until Hiram's shoulders began to stoop and hollows to appear in his cheeks and under his ears, and a waxlike pallor to overspread his face. Then she knew that he was not well physically; and, being a

practical woman, she dismissed the mental causes of the change. "People talk a lot about their mental troubles," she said to herself, "but it's usually three-fourths stomach and liver."

As Hiram and illness, real illness, could not be associated in her mind, she gave the matter no importance until she heard him sigh heavily one night, after they had been in bed several hours. "What is it, father?" she asked.

There was no answer, but a return to an imitation of the regular breathing of a sleeper.

"Hiram," she insisted, "what is it?"

"Nothing, Ellen, nothing," he answered; "I must have ate something that don't sit quite right."

"You didn't take no supper at all," said she.

This reminded him how useless it was to try to deceive her. "I ain't been feeling well of late," he confessed, "but it'll soon be over." He did not see the double meaning of his words until he had uttered them; he stirred uneasily in his dread that she would suspect. "I went to the doctor."

"What did he say?—though I don't know why I should ask what such a fool as Milbury said about anything."

"I got some medicine," replied he, evading telling her what doctor.

Instantly she sat up in bed. "I haven't seen you take no drugs!" she exclaimed. Drugs were her especial abhorrence. She let no one in the family take any until she had passed upon them.

"I didn't want to make a fuss," he explained.

"Where is it?" she demanded, on the edge of the bed now, ready to rise.

"I'll show it to you in the morning, mother. Lie down and go to sleep. I've been awake long enough."

"Where is it?" she repeated, and he heard her moving across the room toward the gas fixture.

"In my vest pocket. It's a box of pills. You can't tell nothin' about it."

She lit the gas and went to his waistcoat, hanging where it always hung at night—on a hook beside the closet door. He

watched her fumble through the pockets, watched her take her spectacles from the corner of the mantel and put them on, the bridge well down toward the end of her nose. A not at all romantic figure she made, standing beside the sputtering gas jet, her spectacles balanced on her nose, her thin neck and forearms exposed, and her old face studying the lid of the pill box held in her toil- and age-worn hands. The box dropped from her fingers and rolled along the floor. He saw an awful look slowly creep over her features as the terrible thought crept over her mind. As she began to turn her face toward him, with a motion of the head like that of a machine on unoiled bearings, he closed his eyes; but he felt her looking at him.

"Dr. Schulze!" she said, an almost soundless breathing of the name that always meant the last resort in mortal illness.

He was trying to think of lies to tell her, but he could think of nothing. The sense of light upon his eyelids ceased. He presently felt her slowly getting into bed. A pall-like silence; then upon his cheek, in long discontinued caress, a hand whose touch was as light and soft as the fall of a rose leaf —the hand of love that toil and age cannot make harsh, and her fingers were wet with her tears. Thus they lay in the darkness and silence, facing together the tragedy of the eternal separation.

"What did he say, dearest?" she asked. She had not used that word to him since the first baby came and they began to call each other "father" and "mother." All these years the children had been between them, and each had held the other important chiefly as related to them. Now it was as in their youth—just he and she, so close that only death could come between them.

"It's a long way off," said Hiram. He would not set ringing in her ears that knell which was clanging to him its solemn, incessant, menacing "Put your house in order!"

"Tell me what he said," she urged gently.

"He couldn't make out exactly. The medicine'll patch me up."

She did not insist—why fret him to confess what she knew the instant she read "Schulze" on the box? After an hour she heard him breathing as only a sleeper can breathe; but she watched on until morning. When they were dressing, each looked at the other furtively from time to time, a great tenderness in his eyes, and in hers the anguish of a dread that might not be spoken.

On the day after Mrs. Whitney's arrival for the summer, she descended in state from the hills to call upon the Rangers.

When the front bell rang Mrs. Ranger was in the kitchen —and was dressed for the kitchen. As the "girl" still had not been replaced she answered the door herself. In a gingham wrapper, with her glasses thrust up into her gray hair, she was facing a footman in livery.

"Are Mrs. Ranger and Miss Ranger at home?" asked he, mistaking her for a servant and eying her dishevelment with an expression which was not lost on her.

She smiled with heartiest good nature. "Yes, I'm here— I'm Mrs. Ranger," said she; and she looked beyond him to the victoria in which sat Mrs. Whitney. "How d'ye do, Matilda?" she called. "Come right in. As usual when the canneries are running, I'm my own upstairs girl. I reckon your young man here thinks I ought to discharge her and get one that's tidier."

"Your young man here" was stiffly touching the brim of his top hat and saying: "Beg parding, ma'am."

"Oh, that's all right," replied Mrs. Ranger; "I am what I look to be!"

Behind her now appeared Adelaide, her cheeks burning in mortification she was ashamed of feeling and still more ashamed of being unable to conceal. "Go and put on something else, mother," she urged in an undertone; "I'll look after Mrs. Whitney till you come down."

"Ain't got time," replied her mother, conscious of what was in her daughter's mind and a little contemptuous and a

little resentful of it. "I guess Tilly Whitney will understand. If she don't, why, I guess we can bear up under it."

Mrs. Whitney had left her carriage and was advancing up the steps. She was a year older than Ellen Ranger; but so skillfully was she got together that, had she confessed to forty or even thirty-eight, one who didn't know would have accepted her statement as too cautious by hardly more than a year or so. The indisputably artificial detail in her elegant appearance was her hair; its tinting, which had to be made stronger year by year as the gray grew more resolute, was reaching the stage of hard, rough-looking red. "Another year or two," thought Adelaide, "and it'll make her face older than she really is. Even now she's getting a tough look."

Matilda kissed Mrs. Ranger and Adelaide affectedly on both cheeks. "I'm so glad to find you in!" said she. "And you, poor dear"—this to Mrs. Ranger—"are in agony over the servant question." She glanced behind her to make sure the carriage had driven away. "I don't know what we're coming to. I can't keep a man longer than six months. Servants don't appreciate a good home and good wages. As soon as a man makes acquaintances here he becomes independent and leaves. If something isn't done, the better class of people will have to move out of the country."

"Or go back to doing their own work," said Mrs. Ranger.

Mrs. Whitney smiled vaguely—a smile which said, "I'm too polite to answer that remark as it deserves."

"Why didn't you bring Jenny along?" inquired Mrs. Ranger, when they were in the "front parlor," the two older women seated, Adelaide moving restlessly about.

"Janet and Ross haven't come yet," answered Mrs. Whitney. "They'll be on next week, but only for a little while. They both like it better in the East. All their friends are there and there's so much more to do." Mrs. Whitney sighed; before her rose the fascination of all there was to "do" in the East—the pleasures she was denying herself.

"I don't see why you don't live in New York," said Mrs. Ranger. "You're always talking about it."

"Oh, I can't leave Charles!" was Mrs. Whitney's answer. "Or, rather he'd not hear of my doing it. But I think he'll let us take an apartment at Sherry's next winter—for the season, just—unless Janet and I go abroad."

Mrs. Ranger had not been listening. She now started up. "If you'll excuse me, Mattie, I must see what that cook's about. I'm afraid to let her out of my sight for five minutes for fear she'll up and leave."

"What a time your poor mother has!" said Mrs. Whitney, when she and Adelaide were alone.

Del had recovered from her attack of what she had been denouncing to herself as snobbishness. For all the gingham wrapper and spectacles anchored in the hair and general air of hard work and no "culture," she was thinking, as she looked at Mrs. Whitney's artificiality and listened to those affected accents, that she was glad her mother was Ellen Ranger and not Matilda Whitney. "But mother doesn't believe she has a hard time," she answered, "and everything depends on what one believes oneself; don't you think so? I often envy her. She's always busy and interested. And she's so useful, such a happiness-maker."

"I often feel that way, too," responded Mrs. Whitney, in her most profusely ornate "*grande dame*" manner. "I get *so* bored with leading an artificial life. I often wish fate had been more kind to me. I was reading, the other day, that the Queen of England said she had the tastes of a dairy maid. Wasn't that charming? Many of us whom fate has condemned to the routine of high station feel the same way."

It was by such deliverances that Mrs. Whitney posed, not without success, as an intellectual woman who despised the frivolities of a fashionable existence—this in face of the obvious fact that she led a fashionable existence, or, rather, it led her, from the moment her *masseuse* awakened her in the morning until her maid undressed her at night. But, although Adelaide was far too young, too inexperienced to know that judgment must always be formed from actions, never from

words, she was not, in this instance, deceived. "It takes more courage than most of us have," said she, "to do what we'd like instead of what vanity suggests."

Mrs. Whitney did not understand this beyond getting from it a vague sense that she had somehow been thrust at. "You must be careful of that skin of yours, Adele," she thrust back. "I've been looking at it. You can't have been home long, yet the exposure to the sun is beginning to show. You have one of those difficult, thin skins, and one's skin is more than half one's beauty. You ought never to go out without a veil. The last thing Ross said to me was, 'Do tell Adelaide to keep her color down.' You know he admires the patrician style."

Adelaide could not conceal the effect of the shot. Her skin was a great trial to her, it burned so easily; and she hated wrapping herself in under broad brims and thick veils when the feeling of bareheadedness was so delightful. "At any rate," said she sweetly, "it's easier to keep color down than to keep it up."

Mrs. Whitney pretended not to hear. She was now at the window which gave on the garden by way of a small balcony. "There's your father!" she exclaimed; "let's go to him."

There, indeed, was Hiram, pacing the walk along the end of the garden with a ponderousness in the movements of his big form that bespoke age and effort. It irritated Mrs. Whitney to look at him, as it had irritated her to look at Ellen; very painful were the reminders of the ravages of time from these people of about her own age, these whom she as a child had known as children. Crow's-feet and breaking contour and thin hair in those we have known only as grown people, do not affect us; but the same signs in lifelong acquaintances make it impossible to ignore Decay holding up the mirror to us and pointing to aging mouth and throat, as he wags his hideous head and says, "Soon—*you*, too!"

Hiram saw Matilda and his daughter the instant they appeared on the balcony, but he gave no hint of it until they were in the path of his monotonous march. He was nerving himself for Mrs. Whitney as one nerves himself in a dentist's

chair for the descent of the grinder upon a sensitive tooth. Usually she got no further than her first sentence before irritating him. To-day the very sight of her filled him with seemingly causeless anger. There was a time when he, watching Matilda improve away from her beginnings as the ignorant and awkward daughter of the keeper of a small hotel, had approved of her and had wished that Ellen would give more time to the matter of looks. But latterly he had come to the conclusion that a woman has to choose between improving her exterior and improving her interior, and that it is impossible or all but impossible for her to do both; he therefore found in Ellen's very indifference to exteriors another reason why she seemed to him so splendidly the opposite of Charles's wife.

"You certainly look the same as ever, Hiram," Matilda said, advancing with extended, beautifully gloved hand. The expression of his eyes as he turned them upon her gave her a shock, but she forced the smile back into her face and went on, "Ross says you always make him think of a tower on top of a high hill, one that has always stood there and always will."

The gray shadow over Hiram's face grew grayer.

"But you ought to rest," Mrs. Whitney went on. "You and Charles both ought to rest. It's ridiculous, the way American men act. Now, Charles has never taken a real vacation. When he does go away he has a secretary with him and works all day. But at least he gets change of scene, while you—you rarely miss a day at the mills."

"I haven't missed a whole day in forty-three years," replied Hiram, "except the day I got married, and I never expect to. I'll drop in the harness. I'd be lost without it."

"Don't you think that's a narrow view of life?" asked Mrs. Whitney. "Don't you think we ought all to take time to cultivate our higher natures?"

"What do you mean by higher natures?"

Mrs. Whitney scented sarcasm and insult. To interrogate a glittering generality is to slur its projector; she wished her

hearers to be dazzled, not moved to the impertinence of cross-examination. "I think you understand me," she said loftily.

"I don't," replied Hiram. "I'm only a cooper and miller. I haven't had the advantages of a higher education"—this last with a steady look toward his son, approaching from the direction of the stables. The young man was in a riding suit that was too correct at every point for good taste, except in a college youth, and would have made upon anyone who had been born, or initiated into, the real mysteries of "good form" an impression similar to that of Mrs. Whitney's costume and accent and manner. There was the note of the fashion plate, the evidence of pains, of correctness not instinctive but studied—the marks our new-sprung obstreperous aristocracy has made familiar to us all. It would have struck upon a sense of humor like a trivial twitter from the oboe trickling through a lull in the swell of brasses and strings; but Hiram Ranger had no sense of humor in that direction, had only his instinct for the right and the wrong. The falseness, the absence of the quality called "the real thing," made him bitter and sad. And, when his son joined them and walked up and down with them, he listened with heavier droop of face and form to the affected chatter of the young "man of the world" and the old "*grande dame*" of Chicago society. They talked the language and the affairs of a world he had never explored and had no wish to explore; its code and conduct, his training, his reason and his instinct all joined in condemning as dishonorable shirking of a man's and woman's part in a universe so ordered that, to keep alive in it, everyone must either work or steal.

But his boy was delighted with the conversation, with Mrs. Whitney, and, finally, with himself. A long, hard ride had scattered his depression of many weeks into a mere haze over the natural sunshine of youth and health; this haze now vanished. When Mrs. Whitney referred to Harvard, he said lightly, "You know I was plucked."

"Ross told me," said she, in an amused tone; "but you'll get back all right next fall."

"I don't know that I care to go," said Arthur. "I've been thinking it over. I believe I've got about all the good a university can do a man. It seems to me a year or so abroad—traveling about, seeing the world—would be the best thing for me. I'm going to talk it over with father—as soon as he gets through being out of humor with me."

Hiram did not look at his son, who glanced a little uneasily at him as he unfolded this new scheme for perfecting his education as "man of the world."

"Surely your father's not *angry*," cried Mrs. Whitney, in a tone intended to make Hiram ashamed of taking so narrow, so rural, a view of his son's fashionable mischance.

"No," replied Hiram, and his voice sounded curt. He added, in an undertone: "I wish I were."

"You're wrong there, Hiram," said Mrs. Whitney, catching the words not intended for her, and misunderstanding them. "It's not a case for severity."

Arthur smiled, and the look he gave his father was a bright indication of the soundness of his heart. Severity! The idea was absurd in connection with the most generous and indulgent of fathers. "You don't get his meaning, Mrs. Whitney," said he. "I, too, wish he were angry. I'm afraid I've made him sad. You know he's got old-fashioned views of many things, and he can't believe I've not really disgraced him and myself."

"Do *you* believe it?" inquired Hiram, with a look at him as sudden and sharp as the ray of a search light.

"I *know* it, father," replied Arthur earnestly. "Am I not right, Mrs. Whitney?"

"Don't be such an old fogy, Hiram," said Mrs. Whitney. "You ought to be thankful you've got a son like Arthur, who makes a splendid impression everywhere. He's the only western man that's got into exclusive societies at Harvard in years simply on his own merits, and he's a great favorite in Boston and in New York."

"My children need no one to defend them to me," said Hiram, in what might be called his quiet tone—the tone he

had never in his life used without drying up utterly the discussion that had provoked it. Many people had noted the curious effect of that tone and had resolved to defy it at the next opportunity, "just to see what the consequences would be." But when the opportunity had come, their courage had always withered.

"You can't expect me to be like you, father. You wouldn't want it," said Arthur, after the pause. "I must be myself, must develop my own individuality."

Ranger stopped and that stopped the others. Without looking at his son, he said slowly: "I ain't disputing that, boy. It ain't the question." There was tremendousness in his restrained energy and intensity as he went on: "What I'm thinking about is whether I ought to keep on *helping* you to 'develop' yourself, as you call it. That's what won't let me rest." And he abruptly walked away.

Mrs. Whitney and Arthur stared after him. "I don't think he's quite well, Artie," she said reassuringly. "Don't worry. He'll come round all right. But you ought to be a little more diplomatic."

Arthur was silent. Diplomacy meant deceit, and he hadn't yet reached the stage of polite and comfortable compromise where deceit figures merely as an amiable convenience for promoting smoothness in human intercourse. But he believed that his father would "come round all right," as Mrs. Whitney had so comfortingly said. How could it be otherwise when he had done nothing discreditable, but, on the contrary, had been developing himself in a way that reflected the highest credit upon his family, as it marched up toward the lofty goal of "cultured" ambition, toward high and secure social station.

Mrs. Whitney, however, did not believe her own statement. In large part her reputation of being a "good, kind sort," like many such reputations, rested on her habit of cheering on those who were going the wrong way and were disturbed by some suspicion of the truth. She had known Hiram Ranger long, had had many a trying experience of his character, gentle as a trade wind—and as steady and unchange-

able. Also, beneath her surface of desperate striving after the things which common sense denounces, or affects to denounce, as foolishness, there was a shrewd, practical person. "He means some kind of mischief," she thought—an unreasoned, instinctive conclusion, and, therefore, all-powerful with a woman.

That evening she wrote her daughter not to cut short her visit to get to Saint X. "Wait until Ross is ready. Then you can join him at Chicago and let him bring you."

Just about the hour she was setting down this first result of her instinct's warning against the danger signal she had seen in Hiram Ranger's manner, he was delivering a bombshell. He had led in the family prayers as usual and had just laid the Bible on the center-table in the back parlor after they rose from their knees. With his hands resting on the cover of the huge volume he looked at his son. There was a sacrificial expression in his eyes. "I have decided to withdraw Arthur's allowance," he said, and his voice sounded hollow and distant, as unfamiliar to his own ears as to theirs. "He must earn his own living. If he wants a place at the mills, there's one waiting for him. If he'd rather work at something else, I'll do what I can to get him a job."

Silence; and Hiram left the room.

Adelaide was first to recover sufficiently to speak. "O mother," cried she, "you're not going to allow this!"

To Adelaide's and Arthur's consternation, Ellen replied quietly: "It ain't no use to talk to him. I ain't lived all these years with your father without finding out when he means what he says."

"It's so unjust!" exclaimed Adelaide.

There came into Ellen's face a look she had never seen there before. It made her say: "O mother, I didn't mean that; only, it does seem hard."

Mrs. Ranger thought so, too; but she would have died rather than have made the thought treason by uttering it. She followed her husband upstairs, saying: "You and Arthur can close up, and put out the lights."

Adelaide, almost in tears over her brother's catastrophe, was thrilled with admiration of his silent, courageous bearing. "What are you going to do, Artie?"

This incautious question drew his inward ferment boiling to the surface. "He has me down and I've got to take his medicine," said the young man, teeth together and eyes dark with fury.

This she did not admire. Her first indignation abated, as she sat on there thinking it out. "Maybe father is nearer right than we know," she said to herself finally. "After all, Arthur will merely be doing as father does. There's *something* wrong with him, and with me, too, or we shouldn't think that so terrible." But to Arthur she said nothing. Encourage him in his present mood she must not; and to try to dissuade him would simply goad him on.

CHAPTER IV

THE SHATTERED COLOSSUS

THAT night there was sleep under Hiram Ranger's roof for Mary the cook only. Of the four wakeful ones the most unhappy was Hiram himself, the precipitator of it all. Arthur had the consolation of his conviction that his calamity was unjust; Adelaide and her mother, of their conviction that in the end it could not but be well with Arthur. For Hiram there was no consolation. He reviewed and re-reviewed the facts, and each time he reached again his original conclusion; the one course in repairing the mistakes of the boy's bringing up was a sharp right-about. "Don't waste no time gettin' off the wrong road, once you're sure it's wrong," had been a maxim of his father, and he had found it a rule with no exceptions. He appreciated that there is a better way from the wrong road into the right than a mad dash straight across the stumpy fields and rocky gullies between. That rough, rude way, however, was the single way open to him here. Whenever it had become necessary for him to be firm with those he loved, it had rarely been possible for him to do right in the right way; he had usually been forced to do right in the wrong way—to hide himself from them behind a manner of cold and silent finality, and, so, to prevent them from forming an alliance and a junction of forces with the traitor softness within him. Besides, gentle, roundabout, gradual measures would require time—delay; and he must "put his house in order" forthwith.

Thus, even the consolation that he was at least doing right

was denied him. As he lay there he could see himself harshly forcing the bitter medicine upon his son, the cure for a disease for which he was himself responsible; he could see his son's look and could not deny its justice. "I reckon he hates me," thought Hiram, pouring vitriol into his own wounds, "and I reckon he's got good cause to."

But there was in the old miller a Covenanter fiber tough as ironwood. The idea of yielding did not enter his head. He accepted his sufferings as part of his punishment for past indulgence and weakness; he would endure, and go forward. His wife understood him by a kind of intuition which, like most of our insight into the true natures of those close about us, was a gradual permeation from the one to the other rather than clear, deliberate reasoning. But the next morning her sore and anxious mother's heart misread the gloom of his strong face into sternness toward her only son.

"When did you allow to put the boy to work, father?" she finally said, and her tone unintentionally made Hiram feel more than ever as if he had sentenced "the boy" to hard labor in the degradation and disgrace of a chain gang.

As he waited some time for self-control before answering, she thought her inquiry had deepened his resentment. "Not that I don't think you're right, maybe," she hasteneed to add, "though"—this wistfully, in a feminine and maternal subtlety of laying the first lines for sapping and mining his position —"I often think about our life, all work and no play, and wonder if we oughtn't to give the children the chance we never had."

"No good never came of idleness," said Hiram, uncompromisingly, "and to be busy about foolishness is still worse. Work or rot—that's life."

"That's so; that's so," she conceded. And she was sincere; for that was her real belief, and what she had hinted was a mere unthinking repetition of the shallow, comfortable philosophy of most people—those "go easys" and "do nothings" and "get nowheres" wherewith Saint X and the surrounding country were burdened. "Still," she went on, aloud,

"Arthur hasn't got any bad habits, like most of the young men round here with more money than's good for them."

"Drink ain't the only bad habit," replied Hiram. "It ain't the worst, though it looks the worst. The boy's got brains. It ain't right to allow him to choke 'em up with nonsense."

Ellen's expression was assent.

"Tell him to come down to the mill next Monday," said Hiram, after another silence, "and tell him to get some clothes that won't look ridiculous." He paused, then added: "A man that ain't ready to do anything, no matter what so long as it's useful and honest, is good for nothing."

The night had bred in Arthur brave and bold resolves. He would not tamely submit; he would cast his father off, would go forth and speedily carve a brilliant career. He would show his father that, even if the training of a gentleman develops tastes above the coarseness of commerce, it also develops the mental superiority that makes fleeing chaff of the obstacles to fame and wealth. He did not go far into details; but, as his essays at Harvard had been praised, he thought of giving literature's road to distinction the preference over the several others that must be smooth before him. Daylight put these imaginings into silly countenance, and he felt silly for having lingered in their company, even in the dark. As he dressed he had much less than his wonted content with himself. He did not take the same satisfaction in his clothes, as evidence of his good taste, or in his admired variations of the fashion of wearing the hair and tying the scarf. Midway in the process of arranging his hair he put down his military brushes; leaning against the dressing table, he fixed his mind upon the first serious thoughts he had ever had in his whole irresponsible, sheltered life. "Well," he said, half-aloud, "there *is* something wrong! If there isn't, why do I feel as if my spine had collapsed?" After a long pause, he added: "And it has! All that held it steady was father's hand."

The whole lofty and beautiful structure of self-compla-

cence upon which he had lounged, preening his feathers and receiving social triumphs and the adulation of his "less fortunate fellows" as the due of his own personal superiority, suddenly slipped from under him. With a rueful smile at his plight, he said: "The governor has called me down." Then, resentfully, and with a return of his mood of dignity outraged and pride trampled upon: "But he had no right to put me up there—or let me climb up there." Once a wrong becomes "vested," it is a "vested right," sacred, taboo. Arthur felt that his father was committing a crime against him.

When he saw Adelaide and his mother their anxious looks made him furious. So! They knew how helpless he was; they were pitying him. *Pitying* him! Pitying *him*! He just tasted his coffee; with scowling brow he hastened to the stables for his saddle horse and rode away alone. "Wait a few minutes and I'll come with you," called Adelaide from the porch as he galloped by. He pretended not to hear. When clear of the town he "took it out" on his horse, using whip and spur until it gripped the bit and ran away. He fought savagely with it; at a turn in the road it slipped and fell, all but carrying him under. He was in such a frenzy that if he had had a pistol he would have shot it. The chemical action of his crisis precipitated in a black mass all the poison his nature had been absorbing in those selfish, supercilious years. So long as that poison was held in suspense it was imperceptible to himself as well as to others. But now, there it was, unmistakably a poison. At the sight his anger vanished. "I'm a beast!" he ejaculated, astonished. "And here I've been imagining I was a fairly decent sort of fellow. What the devil have I been up to, to make me like this?"

He walked along the road, leading his horse by the bridle slipped over his arm. He resumed his reverie of the earlier morning, and began a little less dimly to see his situation from the new viewpoint. "I deserve what I'm getting," he said to himself. Then, at a twinge from the resentment that had gone too deep to be ejected in an instant, he added: "But that doesn't excuse *him*." His father was to blame for the

whole ugly business—for his plight within and without. Still, fixing the blame was obviously unimportant beside the problem of the way out. And for that problem he, in saner mood, began to feel that the right solution was to do something and so become in his own person a somebody, instead of being mere son of a somebody. "I haven't got this shock a minute too soon," he reflected. "I must take myself in hand. I——"

"Why, it's you, Arthur, isn't it?" startled him.

He looked up, saw Mrs. Whitney coming toward him. She was in a winter walking suit, though the day was warm. She was engaged in the pursuit that was the chief reason for her three months' retirement to the bluffs overlooking Saint X—the preservation of her figure. She hated exercise, being by nature as lazy, luxurious, and self-indulgent physically as she was alert and industrious mentally. From October to July she ate and drank about what she pleased, never set foot upon the ground if she could help it, and held her tendency to hips in check by daily massage. From July to October she walked two or three hours a day, heavily dressed, and had a woman especially to attend to her hair and complexion, in addition to the *masseuse* toiling to keep her cheeks and throat firm for the fight against wrinkles and loss of contour.

Arthur frowned at the interruption, then smoothed his features into a cordial smile; and at once that ugly mass of precipitated poison began to redistribute itself and hide itself from him.

"You've had a fall, haven't you?"

He flushed. She, judging with the supersensitive vanity of all her self-conscious "set," thought the flush was at the implied criticism of his skill; but he was far too good a rider to care about his misadventure, and it was her unconscious double meaning that stung him. She turned; they walked together. After a brief debate as to the time for confessing his "fall," which, at best, could remain a secret no longer than Monday, he chose the present. "Father's begun to cut up rough," said he, and his manner was excellent. "He's taken

away my allowance, and I'm to go to work at the mill." He was yielding to the insidious influence of her presence, was dropping rapidly back toward the attitude as well as the accent of "our set."

At his frank disclosure Mrs. Whitney congratulated herself on her shrewdness so heartily that she betrayed it in her face; but Arthur did not see. "I suppose your mother can do nothing with him." This was spoken in a tone of conviction. She always felt that, if she had had Hiram to deal with, she would have been fully as successful with him as she thought she had been with Charles Whitney. She did not appreciate the fundamental difference in the characters of the two men. Both were iron of will; but there was in Whitney—and not in Hiram—a selfishness that took the form of absolute indifference to anything and everything which did not directly concern himself—his business or his physical comfort. Thus his wife had had her way in all matters of the social career, and he would have forced upon her the whole responsibility for the children if she had not spared him the necessity by assuming it. He cheerfully paid the bills, no matter what they were, because he thought his money's power to buy him immunity from family annoyances one of its chief values. She, and everyone else, thought she ruled him; in fact, she not only did not rule him, but had not even influence with him in the smallest trifle of the matters he regarded as important.

The last time he had looked carefully at her—many, many years before—he had thought her beautiful; he assumed thenceforth that she was still beautiful, and was therefore proud of her. In like manner he had made up his mind favorably to his children. As the bills grew heavier and heavier, from year to year, with the wife and two children assiduously expanding them, he paid none the less cheerfully. "There is some satisfaction in paying up for them," reflected he. "At least a man can feel that he's getting his money's worth." And he contrasted his luck with the bad luck of so many men who had to "pay up" for "homely frumps, that look worse the more they spend."

But Arthur was replying to Mrs. Whitney's remark with a bitter "Nobody can do anything with father; he's narrow and obstinate. If you argue with him, he's silent. He cares for nothing but his business."

Arthur did not hesitate to speak thus frankly to Mrs. Whitney. She seemed a member of the family, like a sister of his mother or father who had lived with them always; also he accepted her at the valuation she and all her friends set upon her—he, like herself and them, thought her generous and unselfish because she was lavish with sympathetic words and with alms—the familiar means by which the heartless cheat themselves into a reputation for heart. She always left the objects of her benevolence the poorer for her ministrations, though they did not realize it. She adopted as the guiding principle of her life the cynical philosophy—"Give people what they want, never what they need." By sympathizing effusively with those in trouble, she encouraged them in low-spiritedness; by lavishing alms, she weakened struggling poverty into pauperism. But she took away and left behind enthusiasm for her own moral superiority and humanity. Also she deceived herself and others with such fluid outpourings of fine phrases about "higher life" and "spiritual thinking" as so exasperated Hiram Ranger.

Now, instead of showing Arthur what her substratum of shrewd sense enabled her to see, she ministered soothingly unto his vanity. His father was altogether wrong, tyrannical, cruel; he himself was altogether right, a victim of his father's ignorance of the world.

"I decided not to submit," said Arthur, as if the decision were one which had come to him the instant his father had shown the teeth and claws of tyranny, instead of being an impulse of just that moment, inspired by Mrs. Whitney's encouragement to the weakest and worst in his nature.

"I shouldn't be too hasty about that," she cautioned. "He is old and sick. You ought to be more than considerate. And, also, you should be careful not to make him do anything that would cut you out of your rights."

It was the first time the thought of his "rights"—of the share of his father's estate that would be his when his father was no more—had definitely entered his head. That he would some day be a rich man he had accepted just as he accepted the other conditions of his environment—all to which he was born and in which consisted his title to be regarded as of the "upper classes," like his associates at Harvard. Thinking now on the insinuated proposition that his father might disinherit him, he promptly rejected it. "No danger of his doing that," he assured her, with the utmost confidence. "Father is an honest man, and he wouldn't think of anything so dishonest, so dishonorable."

This view of a child's rights in the estate of its parents amused Mrs. Whitney. She knew how quickly she would herself cut off a child of hers who was obstinately disobedient, and, while she felt that it would be an outrage for Hiram Ranger to cut off his son for making what she regarded as the beginning of the highest career, the career of "gentleman," still she could not dispute his right to do so. "Your father may not see your rights in the same light that you do, Arthur," said she mildly. "If I were you, I'd be careful."

Arthur reflected. "I don't think it's possible," said he, "but I guess you're right. I must not forget that I've got others to think of besides myself."

This patently meant Janet; Mrs. Whitney held her discreet tongue.

"It will do no harm to go to the office," she presently continued. "You ought to get some knowledge of business, anyhow. You will be a man of property some day, and you will need to know enough about business to be able to supervise the managers of your estate. You know, I had Janet take a course at a business college, last winter, and Ross is in with his father and will be active for several years."

Thus it came about that on Monday morning at nine Arthur sauntered into the offices of the mills. He was in much such a tumult of anger, curiosity, stubbornness, and nervous-

ness as agitates a child on its first appearance at school; but in his struggle not to show his feelings he exaggerated his pose into a seeming of bored indifference. The door of his father's private room was open; there sat Hiram, absorbed in dictating to a stenographer. When his son appeared in the doorway, he apparently did not realize it, though in fact the agitation the young man was concealing under that unfortunate manner was calmness itself in comparison with the state of mind behind Hiram's mask of somber stolidity.

"He's trying to humiliate me to the depths," thought the son, as he stood and waited, not daring either to advance or to retreat. How could he know that his father was shrinking as a criminal from the branding iron, that every nerve in that huge, powerful, seemingly impassive body was in torture from this ordeal of accepting the hatred of his son in order that he might do what he considered to be his duty? At length the young man said: "I'm here, father."

"Be seated—just a minute," said the father, turning his face toward his boy but unable to look even in that direction.

The letter was finished, and the stenographer gathered up her notes and withdrew. Hiram sat nerving himself, his distress accentuating the stern strength of his features. Presently he said: "I see you haven't come dressed for work."

"Oh, I think these clothes will do for the office," said Arthur, with apparent carelessness.

"But this business isn't run from the office," replied Hiram, with a gentle smile that to the young man looked like the sneer of a tyrant. "It's run from the mill. It prospers —it always has prospered—because I work with the men. I know what they ought to do and what they are doing. We all work together here. There ain't a Sunday clothes job about the place."

Arthur's fingers were trembling as he pulled at his small mustache. What did this tyrant expect of him? He had assumed that a place was to be made for him in the office, a dignified place. There he would master the business, would gather such knowledge as might be necessary successfully to

direct it, and would bestow that knowledge in the humble, out-of-the-way corner of his mind befitting matters of that kind. And here was his father, believing that the same coarse and toilsome methods which had been necessary for himself were necessary for a trained and cultured understanding!

"What do you want me to do?" asked Arthur.

Hiram drew a breath of relief. The boy was going to show good sense and willingness after all. "I guess you'd better learn barrel-making first," said he. He rose. "I'll take you to the foreman of the cooperage, and to-morrow you can go to work in the stave department. The first thing is to learn to make a first-class barrel."

Arthur slowly rose to follow. He was weak with helpless rage. If his father had taken him into the office and had invited him to help in directing the intellectual part of that great enterprise, the part that in a way was not without appeal to the imagination, he felt that he might gradually have accustomed himself to it; but to be put into the mindless routine of the workingman, to be set about menial tasks which a mere muscular machine could perform better than he—what waste, what degradation, what insult!

He followed his father to the cooperage, the uproar of its machinery jarring fiercely upon him, but not so fiercely as did the common-looking men slaving in torn and patched and stained clothing. He did not look at the foreman as his father was introducing them and ignored his proffered hand. "Begin him at the bottom, Patrick," explained Hiram, "and show him no favors. We must give him a good education."

"That's right, Mr. Ranger," said Patrick, eying his new pupil dubiously. He was not skilled in analysis of manner and character, so Arthur's superciliousness missed him entirely and he was attributing the cold and vacant stare to stupidity. "A regular damn dude," he was saying to himself. "As soon as the old man's gone, some fellow with brains'll do him out of the business. If the old man's wise, he'll buy him an annuity, something safe and sure. Why do so many rich people

have sons like that? If I had one of his breed I'd shake his brains up with a stave."

Arthur mechanically followed his father back to the office. At the door Hiram, eager to be rid of him, said: "I reckon that's about all we can do to-day. You'd better go to Black and Peters's and get you some clothes. Then you can show up at the cooperage at seven to-morrow morning, ready to put in a good day's work."

He laid his hand on his son's shoulder, and that gesture and the accompanying look, such as a surgeon might give his own child upon whom he was performing a cruelly painful operation, must have caused some part of what he felt to penetrate to the young man; for, instead of bursting out at his father, he said appealingly: "Would it be a very great disappointment to you if I were to go into—into some—some other line?"

"What line?" asked Hiram.

"I haven't settled—definitely. But I'm sure I'm not fitted for this." He checked himself from going on to explain that he thought it would mean a waste of all the refinements and elegancies he had been at so much pains to acquire.

"Who's to look after the business when I'm gone?" asked Hiram. "Most of what we've got is invested here. Who's to look after your mother's and sister's interests, not to speak of your own?"

"I'd be willing to devote enough time to it to learn the management," said Arthur, "but I don't care to know all the details."

It was proof of Hiram's great love for the boy that he had no impulse of anger at this display of what seemed to him the most priggish ignorance. "There's only one way to learn," said he quietly. "That's the way I've marked out for you. Don't forget—we start up at seven. You can breakfast with me at a quarter past six, and we'll come down together."

As Arthur walked homeward he pictured himself in jumper and overalls on his way from work of an evening—meeting the Whitneys—meeting Janet Whitney! Like all Americans,

who become inoculated with "grand ideas," he had the supersensitiveness to appearances that makes foreigners call us the most snobbishly conventional people on earth. What would it avail to be in character *the* refined person in the community and in position *the* admired person, if he spent his days at menial toil and wore the livery of labor? He knew Janet Whitney would blush as she bowed to him, and that she wouldn't bow to him unless she were compelled to do so because she had not seen him in time to escape; and he felt that she would be justified. The whole business seemed to him a hideous dream, a sardonic practical joke upon him. Surely, surely, he would presently wake from this nightmare to find himself once more an unimperiled gentleman.

In the back parlor at home he found Adelaide about to set out for the Whitneys. As she expected to walk with Mrs. Whitney for an hour before lunch she was in walking costume—hat, dress, gloves, shoes, stockings, sunshade, all the simplest, most expensive-looking, most unpractical-looking white. From hat to heels she was the embodiment of luxurious, "ladylike" idleness, the kind that not only is idle itself, but also, being beautiful, attractive, and compelling, is the cause of idleness in others. She breathed upon Arthur the delicious perfume of the elegant life from which he was being thrust by the coarse hand of his father—and Arthur felt as if he were already in sweaty overalls.

"Well?" she asked.

"He's going to make a common workman of me," said Arthur, sullen, mentally contrasting his lot with hers. "And he's got me on the hip. I don't dare treat him as he deserves. If I did, he's got just devil enough in him to cheat me out of my share of the property. A sweet revenge he could take on me in his will."

Adelaide drew back—was rudely thrust back by the barrier between her and her brother which had sprung up as if by magic. Across it she studied him with a pain in her heart that showed in her face. "O Arthur, how can you think such a thing!" she exclaimed.

"Isn't it so?" he demanded.

"He has a right to do what he pleases with his own." Then she softened this by adding, "But he'd never do anything unjust."

"It isn't his own," retorted her brother. "It belongs to us all."

"We didn't make it," she insisted. "We haven't any right to it, except to what he gives us."

"Then you think we're living on his charity?"

"No—not just that," she answered hesitatingly. "I've never thought it out—never have thought about it at all."

"He brought us into the world," Arthur pursued. "He has accustomed us to a certain station—to a certain way of living. It's his duty in honesty and in honor to do everything in his power to keep us there."

Del admitted to herself that this was plausible, but she somehow felt that it was not true. "It seems to me that if parents bring their children up to be the right sort—useful and decent and a credit," said she, "they've done the biggest part of their duty. The money isn't so important, is it? At least, it oughtn't to be."

Arthur looked at her with angry suspicion. "Suppose he made a will giving it all to you, Del," he said, affecting the manner of impartial, disinterested argument, "what would *you* do?"

"Share with you, of course," she answered, hurt that he should raise the question at a time when raising it seemed an accusation of her, or at least a doubt of her.

He laughed satirically. "That's what you think now," said he. "But, when the time came, you'd be married to Ross Whitney, and he'd show you how just father's judgment of me was, how wicked it would be to break his last solemn wish and will, and how unfit I was to take care of money. And you'd see it; and the will would stand. Oh, you'd see it! I know human nature. If it was a small estate—in those cases brothers and sisters always act generously—no, not always. Some of 'em, lots of 'em, quarrel and fight over a few

pieces of furniture and crockery. But in a case of a big estate, who ever heard of the one that was favored giving up his advantage unless he was afraid of a scandal, or his lawyers advised him he might as well play the generous, because he'd surely lose the suit?"

"Of course, Arthur, I can't be sure what I'd do," she replied gently; "but I hope I'd not be made altogether contemptible by inheriting a little money."

"But it wouldn't seem contemptible," he retorted. "It'd be legal and sensible, and it'd seem just. You'd only be obeying a dead father's last wishes and guarding the interests of your husband and your children. They come before brothers."

"But not before self-respect," she said very quietly. She put her arm around his neck and pressed her cheek against his. "Arthur—dear—dear—" she murmured, "please don't talk or think about this any more. It—it—hurts." And there were hot tears in her eyes, and at her heart a sense of sickness and of fright; for his presentation of the other side of the case made her afraid of what she might do, or be tempted to do, in the circumstances he pictured. She knew she wouldn't—at least, not so long as she remained the person she then was. But how long would that be? How many years of association with her new sort of friends—with the sort Ross had long been—with the sort she was becoming more and more like—how many, or, rather, how few years would it take to complete the process of making her over into a person who would do precisely what Arthur had pictured?

Arthur had said a great deal more than he intended—more, even, than he believed true. For a moment he felt ashamed of himself; then he reminded himself that he wasn't really to blame; that, but for his father's harshness toward him, he would never have had such sinister thoughts about him or Adelaide. Thus his apology took the form of an outburst against Hiram. "Father has brought out the worst there is in me!" he exclaimed. "He is goading me on to——"

He looked up; Hiram was in the doorway. He sprang to his feet. "Yes, I mean it!" he cried, his brain confused, his

blood on fire. "I don't care what you do. Cut me off! Make me go to work like any common laborer! Crush out all the decency there is in me!"

The figure of the huge old man was like a storm-scarred statue. The tragedy of his countenance filled his son and daughter with awe and terror. Then, slowly, like a statue falling, he stiffly tilted forward, crashed at full length face downward on the floor. He lay as he had fallen, breathing heavily, hoarsely. And they, each tightly holding the other's hand like two little children, stood pale and shuddering, unable to move toward the stricken colossus.

CHAPTER V

THE WILL

HEN Hiram had so far improved that his period of isolation was obviously within a few days of its end, Adelaide suggested to Arthur, somewhat timidly, "Don't you think you ought to go to work at the mills?"

He frowned. It was bad enough to have the inward instinct to this, and to fight it down anew each day as a temptation to weakness and cowardice. That the traitor should get an ally in his sister—it was intolerable. The frown deepened into a scowl.

But Del had been doing real thinking since she saw her father stricken down, and she was beginning clearly to see his point of view as to Arthur. That angry frown was discouraging, but she felt too strongly to be quite daunted. "It might help father toward getting well," she urged, "and make *such* a difference—in *every* way."

"No more hypocrisy. I was right; he was wrong," replied her brother. He had questioned Dr. Schulze anxiously about his father's seizure; and Schulze, who had taken a strong fancy to him and had wished to put him at ease, declared that the attack must have begun at the mills, and would probably have brought Hiram down before he could have reached home, had he not been so powerful of body and of will. And Arthur, easily reassured where he must be assured if he was to have peace of mind, now believed that his outburst had had no part whatever in causing his father's stroke. So he was all for firm stand against slavery. "If I yield an inch now," he went on to Adelaide, "he'll never stop until he has made me his slave.

He has lorded it over those workingmen so long that the least opposition puts him in a frenzy."

Adelaide gave over, for the time, the combat against a stubbornness which was an inheritance from his father. "I've only made him more set by what I've said," thought she. "Now, he has committed himself. I ought not to have been so tactless."

Long after Hiram got back in part the power of speech, he spoke only when directly addressed, and then after a wait in which he seemed to have cast about for the fewest possible words. After a full week of this emphasized reticence, he said, "Where is Arthur?"

Arthur had kept away because—so he told himself and believed—while he was not in the least responsible for his father's illness, still seeing him and being thus reminded of their difference could not but have a bad effect. That particular day, as luck would have it, he for the first time since his father was stricken had left the grounds. "He's out driving," said his mother.

"In the tandem?" asked Hiram.

"Yes," replied Ellen, knowing nothing of the last development of the strained relations between her husband and her "boy."

"Then he hasn't gone to work?"

"He's stayed close to the house ever since you were taken sick, Hiram," said she, with gentle reproach. "He's been helping me nurse you."

Hiram did not need to inquire how little that meant. He knew that, when anyone Ellen Ranger loved was ill, she would permit no help in the nursing, neither by day nor by night. He relapsed into his brooding over the problem which was his sad companion each conscious moment, now that the warning "Put your house in order" had been so sternly emphasized.

The day Dr. Schulze let them bring him down to the first floor, Mrs. Hastings—"Mrs. Fred," to distinguish her from "Mrs. Val"—happened to call. Mrs. Ranger did not like her for two reasons—first, she had married her favorite

cousin, Alfred Hastings, and had been the "ruination" of him; second, she had a way of running on and on to everyone and anyone about the most intimate family affairs, and close-mouthed Ellen Ranger thought this the quintessence of indiscretion and vulgarity. But Hiram liked her, was amused by her always interesting and at times witty thrusts at the various members of her family, including herself. So, Mrs. Ranger, clutching at anything that might lighten the gloom thick and black upon him, let her in and left them alone together. With so much to do, she took advantage of every moment which she could conscientiously spend out of his presence.

At sight of Henrietta, Hiram's face brightened; and well it might. In old-fashioned Saint X it was the custom for a married woman to "settle down" as soon as she returned from her honeymoon—to abandon all thoughts, pretensions, efforts toward an attractive exterior, and to become a "settled" woman, "settled" meaning purified of the last grain of the vanity of trying to please the eye or ear of the male. And conversation with any man, other than her husband—and even with him, if a woman were soundly virtuous, through and through—must be as clean shorn of allurement as a Quaker meetinghouse. Mrs. Fred had defied this ancient and sacred tradition of the "settled" woman. She had kept her looks; she frankly delighted in the admiration of men. And the fact that the most captious old maid in Saint X could not find a flaw in her character as a faithful wife, aggravated the offending. For, did not her devotion to her husband make dangerous her example of frivolity retained and flaunted, as a pure private life in an infidel made his heresies plausible and insidious? At "almost" forty, Mrs. Hastings looked "about" thirty and acted as if she were a girl or a widow. Each group of gods seems ridiculous to those who happen not to believe in it. Saint X's set of gods of conventionality doubtless seems ridiculous to those who knock the dust before some other set; but Saint X cannot be blamed for having a sober face before its own altars, and reserving its jeers and pitying smiles for deities of conventionality in high dread and awe elsewhere.

And if Mrs. Fred had not been "one of the Fuller heirs," Saint X would have made her feel its displeasure, instead of merely gossiping and threatening.

"I'm going the round of the invalids to-day," began Henrietta, after she had got through the formula of sick-room conversation. "I've just come from old John Skeffington. I found all the family in the depths. He fooled 'em again last night."

Hiram smiled. All Saint X knew what it meant for old Skeffington to "fool 'em again." He had been dying for three years. At the first news that he was seized of a mortal illness his near relations, who had been driven from him by his temper and his parsimony, gathered under his roof from far and near, each group hoping to induce him to make a will in its favor. He lingered on, and so did they—watching each other, trying to outdo each other in complaisance to the humors of the old miser. And he got a new grip on life through his pleasure in tyrannizing over them and in putting them to great expense in keeping up his house. He favored first one group, then another, taking fagots from fires of hope burning too high to rekindle fires about to expire.

"How is he?" asked Hiram.

"*They* say he can't last till fall," replied Henrietta; "but he'll last another winter, maybe ten. He's having more and more fun all the time. He has made them bring an anvil and hammer to his bedside, and whenever he happens to be sleeping badly—and that's pretty often—he bangs on the anvil until the last one of his relations has got up and come in; then, maybe he'll set 'em all to work mending his fishing tackle—right in the dead of night."

"Are they all there still?" asked Hiram. "The Thomases, the Wilsons, the Frisbies, and the two Cantwell old maids?"

"Everyone—except Miss Frisbie. She's gone back home to Rushville, but she's sending her sister on to take her place to-morrow. I saw Dory Hargrave in the street a while ago. You know his mother was a first cousin of old John's. I told

him he ought not to let strangers get the old man's money, that he ought to shy *his* castor into the ring."

"And what did Dory say?" asked Hiram.

"He came back at me good and hard," said Mrs. Fred, with a good-humored laugh. "He said there'd been enough people in Saint X ruined by inheritances and by expecting inheritances. You know the creek that flows through the graveyard has just been stopped from seeping into the reservoir. Well, Dory spoke of that and said there was, and always had been, flowing from every graveyard a stream far more poisonous than any graveyard creek, yet nobody talked of stopping it."

The big man, sitting with eyes downcast, began to rub his hands, one over the other—a certain sign that he was thinking intently.

"There's a good deal of truth in what he said," she went on. "Look at our family, for instance. We've been living on an allowance from Grandfather Fuller in Chicago for forty years. None of us has ever done a stroke of work; we've simply been waiting for him to die and divide up his millions. Look at us! Bill and Tom drunkards, Dick a loafer without even the energy to be a drunkard; Ed dead because he was too lazy to keep alive. Alice and I married nice fellows; but as soon as they got into our family they began to loaf and wait. We've been waiting in decent, or I should say, indecent, poverty for forty years, and we're still waiting. We're a lot of paupers. We're on a level with the Wilmots."

"Yes—there are the Wilmots, too," said Hiram absently.

"That's another form of the same disease," Henrietta went on. "Did you know General Wilmot?"

"He was a fine man," said Hiram, "one of the founders of this town, and he made a fortune out of it. He got overbearing, and what he thought was proud, toward the end of his life. But he had a good heart and worked for all he had —honest work."

"And he brought his family up to be real down-East gentlemen and ladies," resumed Henrietta. "And look at 'em.

They lost the money, because they were too gentlemanly and too ladylike to work to hold on to it. And there they live in the big house, half-starved. Why, really, Mr. Ranger, they don't have enough to eat. And they dress in clothes that have been in the family for a generation. They make their underclothes out of old bed linen. And the grass on their front lawns is three feet high, and the moss and weeds cover and pry up the bricks of their walks. They're too 'proud' to work and too poor to hire. How much have they borrowed from you?"

"I don't know," said Hiram. "Not much."

"I know better—and you oughtn't to have lent them a cent. Yesterday old Wilmot was hawking two of his grandfather's watches about. And all the Wilmots have got brains, just as our family has. Nothing wrong with either of us, but that stream Dory Hargrave was talking about."

"There's John Dumont," mused Ranger.

"Yes—*he* is an exception. But what's he doing with what his father left him? I don't let them throw dust in my eyes with his philanthropy as they call it. The plain truth is he's a gambler and a thief, and he uses what his father left him to be gambler and thief on the big scale, and so keep out of the penitentiary—'finance,' they call it. If he'd been poor, he'd have been in jail long ago—no, he wouldn't—he'd have done differently. It was the money that started him wrong."

"A great deal of good can be done with money," said Hiram.

"Can it?" demanded Mrs. Fred. "It don't look that way to me. I'm full of this, for I was hauling my Alfred over the coals this very morning"—she laughed—"for being what I've made him, for doing what I'd do in his place—for being like my father and my brothers. It seems to me, precious little of the alleged good that's done with wealth is really good; and what little isn't downright bad hides the truth from people. Talk about the good money does! What does it amount to—the good that's good, and the good that's rotten bad? What does it all amount to beside the

good that having to work does? People that have to work hard are usually honest and have sympathy and affection and try to amount to something. And if they are bad, why at least they can't hurt anybody but themselves very much, where a John Dumont or a Skeffington can injure hundreds—thousands. Take your own case, Mr. Ranger. Your money has never done you any good. It was your hard work. All your money has ever done has been— Do you think your boy and girl will be as good a man and woman, as useful and creditable to the community, as you and Cousin Ellen?"

Hiram said nothing; he continued to slide his great, strong, useful-looking hands one over the other.

"A fortune makes a man stumble along if he's in the right road, makes him race along if he's in the wrong road," concluded Henrietta.

"You must have been talking a great deal to young Hargrave lately," said Hiram shrewdly.

She blushed. "That's true," she admitted, with a laugh. "But I'm not altogether parroting what he said. I do my own thinking." She rose. "I'm afraid I haven't cheered you up much."

"I'm glad you came," replied Hiram earnestly; then, with an admiring look, "It's a pity some of the men of your family haven't got your energy."

She laughed. "They have," said she. "Every one of us is a first-rate talker—and that's all the energy I've got—energy to wag my tongue. Still— You didn't know I'd gone into business?"

"Business?"

"That is, I'm backing Stella Wilmot in opening a little shop—to sell millinery."

"A Wilmot at work!" exclaimed Hiram.

"A Wilmot at work," affirmed Henrietta. "She's more like her great grandfather; you know how a bad trait will skip several generations and then show again. The Wilmots have been cultivating the commonness of work out of their blood for three generations, but it has burst in again. She

made a declaration of independence last week. She told the family she was tired of being a pauper and beggar. And when I heard she wanted to do something I offered to go in with her in a business. She's got a lot of taste in trimming hats. She certainly has had experience enough."

"She always looks well," said Hiram.

"And you'd wonder at it, if you were a woman and knew what she's had to work on. So I took four hundred dollars grandfather sent me as a birthday present, and we're going to open up in a small way. She's to put her name out—my family won't let me put mine out, too. 'Wilmot & Hastings' would sound well, don't you think? But it's got to be 'Wilmot & Co.' We've hired a store—No. 263 Monroe Street. We have our opening in August."

"Do you need any—" began Hiram.

"No, thank you," she cut in, with a laugh. "This is a close corporation. No stock for sale. We want to hold on to every cent of the profits."

"Well," said Hiram, "if you ever do need to borrow, you know where to come."

"Where the whole town comes when it's hard up," said Henrietta; and she astonished the old man by giving him a shy, darting kiss on the brow. "Now, don't you tell your wife!" she exclaimed, laughing and blushing furiously and making for the door.

When Adelaide, sent by her mother, came to sit with him, he said: "Draw the blinds, child, and leave me alone. I want to rest." She obeyed him. At intervals of half an hour she opened the door softly, looked in at him, thought he was asleep, and went softly away. But he had never been further from sleep in his life. Henrietta Hastings's harum-scarum gossiping and philosophizing happened to be just what his troubled mind needed to precipitate its clouds into a solid mass that could be clearly seen and carefully examined. Heretofore he had accepted the conventional explanations of all the ultimate problems, had regarded philosophers as time wasters, own brothers to the debaters who whittled on dry-goods boxes at

the sidewalk's edge in summer and about the stoves in the rear of stores in winter, settling all affairs save their own. But now, sitting in enforced inaction and in the chill and calm which diffuses from the tomb, he was using the unused, the reflective, half of his mind.

Even as Henrietta was talking, he began to see what seemed to him the hidden meaning in the mysterious "Put your house in order" that would give him no rest. But he was not the man to make an important decision in haste, was the last man in the world to inflict discomfort, much less pain, upon anyone, unless the command to do it came unmistakably in the one voice he dared not disobey. Day after day he brooded; night after night he fought to escape. But, slowly, inexorably, his iron inheritance from Covenanter on one side and Puritan on the other asserted itself. Heartsick, and all but crying out in anguish, he advanced toward the stern task which he could no longer deny or doubt that the Most High God had set for him.

He sent for Dory Hargrave's father.

Mark Hargrave was president of the Tecumseh Agricultural and Classical University, to give it its full legal entitlements. It consisted in a faculty of six, including Dr. Hargrave, and in two meager and modest, almost mean "halls," and two hundred acres of land. There were at that time just under four hundred students, all but about fifty working their way through. So poor was the college that it was kept going only by efforts, the success of which seemed miraculous interventions of Providence. They were so regarded by Dr. Hargrave, and the stubbornest infidel must have conceded that he was not unjustified.

As Hargrave, tall and spare, his strong features illumined by life-long unselfish service to his fellow-men, came into Hiram Ranger's presence, Hiram shrank and grew gray as his hair. Hargrave might have been the officer come to lead him forth to execution.

"If you had not sent for me, Mr. Ranger," he began,

after the greetings, "I should have come of my own accord within a day or two. Latterly God has been strongly moving me to lay before you the claims of my boys—of the college."

This was to Hiram direct confirmation of his own convictions. He tried to force his lips to say so, but they would not move.

"You and Mrs. Ranger," Hargrave went on, "have had a long life, full of the consciousness of useful work well done. Your industry, your fitness for the just use of God's treasure, has been demonstrated, and He has made you stewards of much of it. And now approaches the final test, the greatest test, of your fitness to do His work. In His name, my old friend, what are you going to do with His treasure?"

Hiram Ranger's face lighted up. The peace that was entering his soul lay upon the tragedy of his mental and physical suffering soft and serene and sweet as moonlight beautifying a ruin. "That's why I sent for you, Mark," he said.

"Hiram, are you going to leave your wealth so that it may continue to do good in the world? Or, are you going to leave it so that it may tempt your children to vanity and selfishness, to lives of idleness and folly, to bring up their children to be even less useful to mankind than they, even more out of sympathy with the ideals which God has implanted? All of those ideals are attainable only through shoulder-to-shoulder work such as you have done all your life."

"God help me!" muttered Hiram. The sweat was beading his forehead and his hands were clasped and wrenching each at the other, typical of the two forces contending in final battle within him. "God help me!"

"Have you ever looked about you in this town and thought of the meaning of its steady decay, moral and physical? God prospered the hard-working men who founded it; but, instead of appreciating His blessings, they regarded the wealth He gave them as their own; and they left it to their children. And see how their sin is being visited upon the third and fourth generations! Industry has been slowly paralyzing. The

young people, whose wealth gave them the best opportunities, are leading idle lives, are full of vanity of class and caste, are steeped in the sins that ever follow in the wake of idleness —the sins of selfishness and indulgence. Instead of being workers, leading in the march upward, instead of taking the position for which their superior opportunities should have fitted them, they set an example of idleness and indolence. They despise their ancestry of toil which should be their pride. They pride themselves upon the parasitism which is their shame. And they set before the young an example of contempt for work, of looking on it as a curse and a disgrace."

"I have been thinking of these things lately," said Hiram.

"It is the curse of the world, this inherited wealth," cried Hargrave. "Because of it humanity moves in circles instead of forward. The ground gained by the toiling generations, is lost by the inheriting generations. And this accursed inheritance tempts men ever to long for and hope for that which they have not earned. God gave man a trial of the plan of living in idleness upon that which he had not earned, and man fell. Then God established the other plan, and through it man has been rising—but rising slowly and with many a backward slip, because he has tried to thwart the Divine plan with the system of inheritance. Fortunately, the great mass of mankind has had nothing to leave to heirs, has had no hope of inheritances. Thus, new leaders have ever been developed in place of those destroyed by inherited prosperity. But, unfortunately, the law of inheritance has been able to do its devil's work upon the best element in every human society, upon those who had the most efficient and exemplary parents, and so had the best opportunity to develop into men and women of the highest efficiency. No wonder progress is slow, when the leaders of each generation have to be developed from the bottom all over again, and when the ideal of useful work is obscured by the false ideal of living without work. Waiting for dead men's shoes! Dead men's shoes instead of shoes of one's own."

"Dead men's shoes," muttered Hiram.

"The curse of unearned wealth," went on his friend. "Your life, Hiram, leaves to your children the injunction to work, to labor cheerfully and equally, honestly and helpfully, with their brothers and sisters; but your wealth— If you leave it to them, will it not give that injunction the lie, will it not invite them to violate that injunction?"

"I have been watching my children, my boy, especially," said Hiram. "I don't know about all this that you've been saying. It's a big subject; but I do know about this boy of mine. I wish I'd 'a' taken your advice, Mark, and put him in your school. But his mother was set on the East—on Harvard." Tears were in his eyes at this. He remembered how she, knowing nothing of college, but feeling it was her duty to have her children educated properly, a duty she must not put upon others, had sent for the catalogues of all the famous colleges in the country. He could see her poring over the catalogues, balancing one offering of educational advantage against another, finally deciding for Harvard, the greatest of them all. He could hear her saying: "It'll cost a great deal, Hiram. As near as I can reckon it out it'll cost about a thousand dollars a year—twelve hundred if we want to be v-e-r-y liberal, so the catalogue says. But Harvard's the biggest, and has the most teachers and scholars, and takes in all the branches. And we ought to give our Arthur the best." And now— By what bitter experience had he learned that the college is not in the catalogue, is a thing apart, unrelated and immeasurably different! His eyes were hot with anger as he thought how the boy's mother, honest, conscientious Ellen, had been betrayed.

"Look here, Mark," he blazed out, "if I leave money to your college I want to see that it can't ever be like them eastern institutions of learning." He made a gesture of disgust. "Learning!"

"If you leave us anything, Hiram, leave it so that any young man who gets its advantages must work for them."

"That's it!" exclaimed Hiram. "That's what I want. Can you draw me up that kind of plan? No boy, no matter

what he has at home, can come to that there college without working his way through, without learning to work, me to provide the chance to earn the living."

"I have just such a plan," said Hargrave, drawing a paper from his pocket. "I've had it ready for years waiting for just such an opportunity."

"Read it," said Hiram, sinking deep in his big chair and closing his eyes and beginning to rub his forehead with his great hand.

And Hargrave read, forgetting his surroundings, forgetting everything in his enthusiasm for this dream of his life—a university, in fact as well as in name, which would attract the ambitious children of rich and well-to-do and poor, would teach them how to live honestly and nobly, would give them not only useful knowledge to work with but also the light to work by. "You see, Hiram, I think a child ought to begin to be a man as soon as he begins to live—a man, standing on his own feet, in his own shoes, with the courage that comes from knowing how to do well something which the world needs."

He looked at Hiram for the first time in nearly half an hour. He was alarmed by the haggard, ghastly gray of that majestic face; and his thought was not for his plan probably about to be thwarted by the man's premature death, but of his own selfishness in wearying and imperiling him by importunity at such a time. "But we'll talk of this again," he said sadly, putting the paper in his pocket and rising for instant departure.

"Give me the paper," said Hiram, putting out his trembling hand, but not lifting his heavy, blue-black lids.

Mark gave it to him hesitatingly. "You'd better put it off till you're stronger, Hiram."

"I'll see," said Hiram. "Good morning, Mark."

Judge Torrey was the next to get Ranger's summons; it came toward mid-afternoon of that same day. Like Hargrave, Torrey had been his life-long friend.

"Torrey," he said, "I want you to examine this plan"—and he held up the paper Hargrave had left—"and, if it is not legal, put it into legal shape, and incorporate it into my will. I feel I ain't got much time." With a far-away, listening look—"I must put my house in order—in order. Draw up a will and bring it to me before five o'clock. I want you to write it yourself—trust no one—no one!" His eyes were bright, his cheeks bluish, and he spoke in a thick, excited voice that broke and shrilled toward the end of each sentence.

"I can't do it to-day. Too much haste——"

"To-day!" commanded Hiram. "I won't rest till it's done!"

"Of course, I can——"

"Read the paper now, and give me your opinion."

Torrey put on his glasses, opened the paper. "Oh!" he exclaimed. "I remember this. It's in my partner's handwriting. Hargrave had Watson draw it up about five years ago. We were very careful in preparing it. It is legal."

"Very well," continued Hiram. "Now I'll give you the points of my will."

Torrey took notebook and pencil from his pocket.

"First," began Hiram, as if he were reciting something he had learned by heart, "to my wife, Ellen, this house and everything in it, and the grounds and all the horses and carriages and that kind of thing."

"Yes," said Torrey, looking up from his note making.

"Second, to my wife an income of seven thousand a year for life—that is what it cost her and me to live last year, and the children—except the extras. Seven thousand for life—but only for life."

"Yes," said Torrey, his glance at Hiram now uneasy and expectant.

"Third, to my daughter, Adelaide, two thousand a year for her life—to be divided among her daughters equally, if she have any; if not, to revert to my estate at her death."

"Yes," said Torrey.

"Fourth, to my son, five thousand dollars in cash."

A long pause, Torrey looking at his old friend and client as if he thought one or the other of them bereft of his senses. At last, he said, "Yes, Hiram."

"Fifth, to my brothers, Jacob and Ezra, four hundred dollars each," continued Hiram, in his same voice of repeating by rote, "and to my sister Prudence, five thousand dollars —so fixed that her husband can't touch it."

"Yes," said Torrey.

"Sixth, the rest of my estate to be made into a trust, with Charles Whitney and Mark Hargrave and Hampden Scarborough trustees, with power to select their successors. The trust to be administered for the benefit of Tecumseh University under the plan you have there."

Torrey half-rose from his chair, his usually calm features reflecting his inner contention of grief, alarm, and protest. But there was in Hiram's face that which made him sink back without having spoken.

"Seventh," continued Hiram, "the mills and the cooperage to be continued as now, and not to be sold for at least fifteen years. If my son Arthur wishes to have employment in them, he is to have it at the proper wages for the work he does. If at the end of fifteen years he wishes to buy them, he to have the right to buy, that is, my controlling interest in them, provided he can make a cash payment of ten per cent of the then value; and, if he can do that, he is to have ten years in which to complete the payment—or longer, if the trustees think it wise."

A long pause; Hiram seemed slowly to relax and collapse like a man stretched on the rack, who ceases to suffer either because the torture is ended or because his nerves mercifully refuse to register any more pain. "That is all," he said wearily.

Torrey wiped his glasses, put them on, wiped them again, hung them on the hook attached to the lapel of his waistcoat, put them on, studied the paper, then said hesitatingly: "As one of your oldest friends, Hiram, and in view of the surprising nature of the—the——"

"I do not wish to discuss it," interrupted Hiram, with that gruff finality of manner which he always used to hide his softness, and which deceived everyone, often even his wife. "Come back at five o'clock with two witnesses."

Torrey rose, his body shifting with his shifting mind as he cast about for an excuse for lingering. "Very well, Hiram," he finally said. As he shook hands, he blurted out huskily, "The boy's a fine young fellow, Hi. It don't seem right to disgrace him by cutting him off this way."

Hiram winced. "Wait a minute," he said. He had been overlooking the public—how the town would gossip and insinuate. "Put in this, Torrey," he resumed after reflecting. And deliberately, with long pauses to construct the phrases, he dictated: "I make this disposal of my estate through my love for my children, and because I have firm belief in the soundness of their character and in their capacity to do and to be. I feel they will be better off without the wealth which would tempt my son to relax his efforts to make a useful man of himself and would cause my daughter to be sought for her fortune instead of for herself."

"That may quiet gossip against your children," said Torrey, when he had taken down Hiram's slowly enunciated words, "but it does not change the extraordinary character of the will."

"John," said Hiram, "can you think of a single instance in which inherited wealth has been a benefit, a single case where a man has become more of a man than he would if he hadn't had it?"

Hiram waited long. Torrey finally said: "That may be, but—" But what? Torrey did not know, and so came to a full stop.

"I've been trying for weeks to think of one," continued Hiram, "and whenever I thought I'd found one, I'd see, on looking at all the facts, that it only *seemed* to be so. And I recalled nearly a hundred instances right here in Saint X where big inheritances or little had been ruinous."

"I have never thought on this aspect of the matter before,"

said Torrey. "But to bring children up in the expectation of wealth, and then to leave them practically nothing, looks to me like—like cheating them."

"It does, John," Hiram answered. "I've pushed my boy and my girl far along the broad way that leads to destruction. I must take the consequences. But God won't let me divide the punishment for my sins with them. I see my duty clear. I must do it. Bring the will at five o'clock."

Hiram's eyes were closed; his voice sounded to Torrey as if it were the utterance of a mind far, far away—as far away as that other world which had seemed vividly real to Hiram all his life; it seemed real and near to Torrey, looking into his old friend's face. "The power that's guiding him," Torrey said to himself, "is one I daren't dispute with." And he went away with noiscless step and with head reverently bent.

CHAPTER VI

MRS. WHITNEY NEGOTIATES

HE Rangers' neighbors saw the visits of Hargrave and Torrey. Immediately a rumor of a bequest to Tecumseh was racing through the town and up the Bluffs and through the fashionable suburb. It arrived at Point Helen, the seat of the Whitneys, within an hour after Torrey left Ranger. It had accumulated confirmatory detail by that time—the bequest was large; was very large; was half his fortune—and the rest of the estate was to go to the college should Arthur and Adelaide die childless.

Mrs. Whitney lost no time. At half-past four she was seated in the same chair in which Hargrave and Torrey had sat. It was not difficult to bring up the subject of the two marriages, which were doubly to unite the houses and fortunes of Ranger and Whitney—the marriages of Arthur and Janet, of Ross and Adelaide. "And, of course," said Mrs. Whitney, "we all want the young people started right. I don't believe children ought to feel dependent on their parents. It seems to me that puts filial and parental love on a very low plane. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," said Hiram.

"The young people ought to feel that their financial position is secure. And, as you and Ellen and Charles and I have lived for our children, have toiled to raise them above the sordid cares and anxieties of life, we ought to complete our work now and make them—happy."

Hiram did not speak, though she gave him ample time.

"So," pursued Mrs. Whitney, "I thought I wouldn't put

off any longer talking about what Charles and I have had in mind some months. Ross and Janet will soon be here, and I know all four of the children are anxious to have the engagements formally completed."

"Completed?" said Hiram.

"Yes," reaffirmed Matilda. "Of course they can't be completed until we parents have done our share. You and Ellen want to know that Arthur and Adelaide won't be at the mercy of any reverse in business Charles might have—or of any caprice which might influence him in making his will. And Charles and I want to feel the same way as to our Ross and Janet."

"Yes," said Hiram. "I see." A smile of stern irony roused his features from their repose into an expressiveness that made Mrs. Whitney exceedingly uncomfortable—but the more resolute.

"Charles is willing to be liberal both in immediate settlement and in binding himself in the matter of his will," she went on. "He often says, 'I don't want my children to be impatient for me to die. I want to make 'em feel they're getting, if anything, more because I'm alive.'"

A long pause, then Hiram said: "That's one way of looking at it."

"That's *your* way," said Matilda, as if the matter were settled. And she smiled her softest and sweetest. But Hiram saw only the glitter in her cold brown eyes, a glitter as hard as the sheen of her henna-stained hair.

"No," said he emphatically, "that's *not* my way. That's the broad and easy way that leads to destruction. Ellen and I," he went on, his excitement showing only in his lapses into dialect, "we hain't worked all our lives so that our children'll be shiftless idlers, settin' 'round, polishin' their fingernails, and thinkin' up foolishness and breedin' fools."

Matilda had always known that Hiram and Ellen were hopelessly vulgar; but she had thought they cherished a secret admiration for the "higher things" beyond their reach, and were resolved that their son should be a gentleman and their

daughter a lady. She found in Hiram's energetic bitterness nothing to cause her to change her view. "He simply wants to hold on to his property to the last, and play the tyrant," she said to herself. "All people of property naturally feel that way." And she held steadily to her programme. "Well, Hiram," she proceeded tranquilly, "if those marriages are to take place, Charles and I will expect you to meet us halfway."

"If Ross and my Delia and Arthur and your Jane are fond of each other, let 'em marry as you and Charles, as Ellen and I married. I ain't buyin' your son, nor sellin' my daughter. That's my last word, Tillie."

On impulse, he pressed the electric button in the wall behind him. When the new upstairs girl came, he said: "Tell the children I want to see 'em."

Arthur and Adelaide presently came, flushed with the exercise of the tennis the girl had interrupted.

"Mrs. Whitney, here," said Hiram, "tells me her children won't marry without settlements, as it's called. And I've been tellin' her that my son and daughter ain't buyin' and sellin'."

Mrs. Whitney hid her fury. "Your father has a quaint way of expressing himself," she said, laughing elegantly. "I've simply been trying to persuade him to do as much toward securing the future of you two as Mr. Whitney is willing to do. Don't be absurd, Hiram. You know better than to talk that way."

Hiram looked steadily at her. "You've been travelin' about, 'Tilda," he said, "gettin' together a lot of newfangled notions. Ellen and I and our children stick to the old way." And he looked at Arthur, then at Adelaide.

Their faces gave him a twinge at the heart. "Speak up!" he said. "Do you or do you not stick to the old way?"

"I can't talk about it, father," was Adelaide's evasive answer, her face scarlet and her eyes down.

"And you, sir?" said Hiram to his son.

"You'll have to excuse me, sir," replied Arthur coldly.

Hiram winced before Mrs. Whitney's triumphant glance. He leaned forward and, looking at his daughter, said: "Del,

would you marry a man who wouldn't take you unless you brought him a fortune?"

"No, father," Adelaide answered. She was meeting his gaze now. "But, at the same time, I'd rather not be dependent on my husband."

"Do you think your mother is dependent on me?"

"That's different," said Adelaide, after a pause.

"How?" asked Hiram.

Adelaide did not answer, could not answer. To answer honestly would be to confess that which had been troubling her greatly of late—the feeling that there was something profoundly unsatisfactory in the relations between Ross and herself; that what he was giving her was different not only in degree but even in kind from what she wanted, or ought to want, from what she was trying to give him, or thought she ought to try to give him.

"And you, Arthur?" asked Hiram in the same solemn, appealing tone.

"I should not ask Janet to marry me unless I was sure I could support her in the manner to which she is accustomed," said Arthur. "I certainly shouldn't wish to be dependent upon her."

"Then, your notion of marrying is that people get married for a living, for luxury. I suppose you'd expect her to leave you if you lost your money?"

"That's different," said Arthur, restraining the impulse to reason with his illogical father whose antiquated sentimentalism was as unfitted to the new conditions of American life as were his ideas about work.

"You see, Hiram," said Mrs. Whitney, good-humoredly, "your children outvote you."

The master workman brought his fist down on the arm of his chair—not a gesture of violence, but of dignity and power. "I don't stand for the notion that marriage is living in luxury and lolling in carriages and showing off before strangers. I told you what my last word was, Matilda."

Mrs. Whitney debated with herself full half a minute be-

fore she spoke. In a tone that betrayed her all but departed hope of changing him, she said: "It is a great shock to me to have you even pretend to be so heartless—to talk of breaking these young people's hearts—just for a notion."

"It's better to break their hearts before marriage," replied Hiram, "than to let them break their lives, and their hearts, too, on such marriages. The girl that wants my son only if he has money to enable her to make a fool of herself, ain't fit to be a wife—and a mother. As for Del and Ross— The man that looks at what a woman *has* will never look at what she *is*—and my daughter's well rid of him."

A painful silence, then Mrs. Whitney rose. "If I hadn't suspected, Hiram, that you intended to cheat your children out of their rights in order to get a reputation as a philanthropist, I'd not have brought this matter up at this time. I see my instincts didn't mislead me. But I don't give up hope. I've known you too many years, Hiram Ranger, not to know that your heart is in the right place. And, after you think it over, you will give up this wicked—yes, wicked—plan old Doctor Hargrave has taken advantage of your sickness to wheedle you into."

Hiram, his face and hands like yellow wax, made no answer. Arthur and Adelaide followed Mrs. Whitney from the room. "Thank you, Mrs. Whitney," said Arthur, gratefully, when they were out of his father's hearing. "I don't know what has come over him of late. He has gone back to his childhood and under the spell of the ideas that seemed, and no doubt were, right then. I believe you have set him to thinking. He's the best father in the world when he is well and can see things clearly."

Mrs. Whitney was not so sanguine, but she concealed it. She appreciated what was troubling Hiram. While she encouraged her own son, her Ross, to be a "gentleman," she had enough of the American left to see the flaws in that new ideal of hers—when looking at another woman's son. And the superciliousness which delighted her in Ross, irritated her in Arthur; for, in him, it seemed a sneering reflection upon the

humble and toilsome beginnings of Charles and herself. She believed—not without reason—that, under Ross's glossy veneer of gentleman, there was a shrewd and calculating nature; it, she thought, would not permit the gentleman to make mess of those matters, which, coarse and sordid though they were, still must be looked after sharply if the gentleman was to be kept going. But she was, not unnaturally, completely taken in by Arthur's similar game, the more easily as Arthur put into it an intensity of energy which Ross had not. She therefore thought Arthur as unpractical as he so fashionably professed, thought he accepted without reservation "our set's" pretenses of aristocracy for appearance's sake. "Of course, your father'll come round," she said, friendly but not cordial. "All that's necessary is that you and Adelaide use a little tact."

And she was in her victoria and away, a very grand-looking lady, indeed, with two in spick and span summer livery on the box, with her exquisite white and gold sunshade, a huge sapphire in the end of the handle, a string of diamonds worth a small fortune round her neck, a gold bag, studded with diamonds, in her lap, and her superb figure clad in a close-fitting white cloth dress. In the gates she swept past Torrey and his two clerks accompanying him as witnesses. She understood; her face was anything but an index to her thoughts as she bowed and smiled graciously in response to the old judge's salutation.

Torrey read the will to Hiram slowly, pausing after each paragraph for sign of approval or criticism. But Hiram gave no more indication of his thought, by word or expression or motion, than if he had been a seated statue. The reading came to an end, but neither man spoke. The choir of birds, assembled in the great trees round the house, flooded the room with their evening melody. At last, Hiram said: "Please move that table in front of me."

Torrey put the table before him, laid the will upon it ready for the signing.

Hiram took a pen; Torrey went to the door and brought

in the two clerks waiting in the hall. The three men stood watching while Hiram's eyes slowly read each word of the will. He dipped the pen and, with a hand that trembled in spite of all his obvious efforts to steady it, wrote his name on the line to which Torrey silently pointed. The clerks signed as witnesses.

"Thank you," said Hiram. "You had better take it with you, judge."

"Very well," said Torrey, tears in his eyes, a quaver in his voice.

A few seconds and Hiram was alone staring down at the surface of the table, where he could still see and read the will. His conscience told him he had "put his house in order"; but he felt as if he had set fire to it with his family locked within, and was watching it and them burn to ashes, was hearing their death cries and their curses upon him.

The two young people, chilled by Mrs. Whitney's manner, flawless though it was, apparently, had watched with sinking hearts the disappearance of her glittering chariot and her glistening steeds. Then they had gone into the garden before Torrey and the clerks arrived. And they sat there thinking each his own kind of melancholy thoughts.

"What did she mean by that remark about Doctor Hargrave?" asked Arthur, after some minutes of this heavy silence.

"I don't know," said Adelaide.

"We must get mother to go at father," Arthur continued.

Adelaide made no answer.

Arthur looked at her irritably. "What are you thinking about, Del?" he demanded.

"I don't like Mrs. Whitney. Do you?"

"Oh, she's a good enough imitation of the real thing," said Arthur. "You can't expect a lady in the first generation."

Adelaide's color slowly mounted. "You don't mean that," said she.

He frowned and retorted angrily: "There's a great deal

of truth that we don't like. Why do you always get mad at me for saying what we both think?"

"I admit it's foolish and wrong of me," said she; "but I can't help it. And if I get half-angry with you, I get wholly angry with myself for being contemptible enough to think those things. Don't you get angry at yourself for thinking them?"

Arthur laughed mirthlessly—an admission.

"We and father can't both be right," she pursued. "I suppose we're both partly right and partly wrong—that's usually the way it is. But I can't make up my mind just where he begins to be wrong."

"Why not admit he's right through and through, and be done with it?" cried Arthur impatiently. "Why not tell him so, and square yourself with him?"

Adelaide, too hurt to venture speech, turned away. She lingered a while in the library; on her way down the hall to ascend to her own room she looked in at her father. There he sat so still that but for the regular rise and fall of his chest she would have thought him dead. "He's asleep," she murmured, the tears standing in her eyes and raining in her heart. Her mother she could judge impartially; her mother's disregard of the changes which had come to assume so much importance in her own and Arthur's lives often made her wince. But the same disregard in a man did not offend her; it had the reverse effect. It seemed to her, to the woman in her, the fitting roughness of the colossal statue. "That's a *man*!" she now said to herself proudly, as she gazed at him.

His eyes opened and fixed upon her in a look so agonized, that she leaned, faint, against the door jamb. "What is it, father?" she gasped.

He did not answer—did not move—sat rigidly on, with that expression unchanging, as if it had been fixed there by the sculptor who had made the statue. She tried to go to him, but at the very thought she was overwhelmed by such fear as she had not had since she, a child, lay in her little bed in the dark, too terrified by the phantoms that beset her to cry

out or to move. "Father! What is it?" she repeated, then wheeled and fled along the hall crying: "Mother! Mother!"

Ellen came hurrying down the stairs.

"It's father!" cried Adelaide.

Together they went into the back parlor. He was still motionless, with that same frozen yet fiery expression. They went to him, tried to lift him. Ellen dropped the lifeless arm, turned to her daughter. And Adelaide saw into her mother's inmost heart, saw the tragic lift of one of those tremendous emotions, which, by their very coming into a human soul, give it the majesty and the mystery of the divine.

"Telephone for Dr. Schulze," she commanded; then, as Adelaide sped, she said tenderly to her husband: "Where is the pain? What can I do?"

But he did not answer. And if he could have answered, what could she have done? The pain was in his heart, was the burning agony of remorse for having done that which he still believed to be right, that which he now thought he would give his soul's salvation for the chance to undo. For, as the paralysis began to lock his body fast in its vise, the awful thought had for the first time come to him: "When my children know what I have done they will *hate* me! They will hate me all their lives."

Dr. Schulze examined him. "Somewhat sooner than I expected," he muttered.

"How long will it last?" said Ellen.

"Some time — several weeks — months — perhaps." He would let her learn gradually that the paralysis would not relax its grip until it had borne him into the eternal prison and had handed him over to the jailer who makes no deliveries.

CHAPTER VII

JILTED

RS. RANGER consented to a third girl, to do the additional heavy work; but a nurse—no! What had Hiram a wife for, and a daughter, and a son, if not to take care of him? What kind of heartlessness was this, to talk of permitting a stranger to do the most sacred offices of love? And only by being on the watch early and late did Adelaide and Arthur prevent her doing everything for him herself.

"Everybody, nowadays, has trained nurses in these cases," said Dr. Schulze. "I don't think you ought to object to the expense."

But the crafty taunt left her as indifferent as did the argument from what "everybody does."

"I don't make rules for others," replied she. "I only say that nobody shall touch Hiram but us of his own blood. I won't hear to it, and the children won't hear to it. They're glad to have the chance to do a little something for him that has done everything for them."

The children thus had no opportunity to say whether they would "hear to it" or not. But Arthur privately suggested to Adelaide that she ought to try to persuade her mother. "It will make her ill, all this extra work," said he.

"Not so quickly as having some one about interfering with her," replied Adelaide.

"Then, too, it *looks* so bad—so stingy and—and—old-fashioned," he persisted.

"Not from mother's point of view," said Adelaide quietly.

Arthur flushed. "Always putting me in the wrong," he sneered. Then, instantly ashamed of this injustice, he went on in a different tone, "I suppose this sort of thing appeals to the romantic strain in you."

"And in mother," said Del.

Whereupon they both smiled. Romantic was about the last word anyone would think of in connection with frankly practical Ellen Ranger. She would have died without hesitation, or lived in torment, for those she loved; but she would have done it in the finest, most matter-of-fact way in the world, and without a gleam of self-conscious heroics, whether of boasting or of martyr-meekness or of any other device for signaling attention to oneself. Indeed, it would not have occurred to her that she was doing anything out of the ordinary. Nor, for that matter, would she have been; for, in this world the unheroic are, more often than not, heroes, and the heroic usually most unheroic. We pass heroism by to toss our silly caps at heroics.

"There are some things, Artie, our education has been taking out of us," continued Del, "that I don't believe we're the better for losing. I've been thinking of those things a good deal lately, and I've come to the conclusion that there really is a rotten streak in what we've been getting there in the East—you at Harvard, I at Mrs. Spenser's Select School for Young Ladies. There are ways in which mother and father are better educated than we."

"It does irritate me," admitted Arthur, "to find myself caring so much about the *looks* of things."

"Especially," said Adelaide, "when the people whose opinion we are afraid of are so contemptibly selfish and snobbish."

"Still mother and father are narrow-minded," insisted her brother.

"Isn't everybody, about people who don't think as they do?"

"I've not the remotest objection to their having their own

views," said Arthur loftily, "so long as they don't try to enforce those views on me."

"But do they? Haven't we been let do about as we please?"

Arthur shrugged his shoulders. The discussion had led up to property again—to whether or not his father had the right to do as he pleased with his own. And upon that discussion he did not wish to reënter. He had not a doubt of the justice of his own views; but, somehow, to state them made him seem sordid and mercenary, even to himself. Being really concerned for his mother's health, as well as about "looks," he strongly urged the doctor to issue orders on the subject of a nurse. "If you demand it, mother'll yield," he said.

"But I shan't, young man," replied Schulze curtly and with a conclusive squeezing together of his homely features. "Your mother is right. She gives your father what money can't buy and skill can't replace, what has often and often raised the as-good-as-dead. Some day, maybe, you'll find out what that is. You think you know now, but you don't." And there the matter rested.

The large room adjoining Hiram and Ellen's bedroom was made over into a sitting room. The first morning on which he could be taken from his bed and partially dressed, Mrs. Ranger called in both the children to assist her. The three tried to conceal their feelings as they, not without physical difficulty, lifted that helpless form to the invalid's chair which Ellen wheeled close to the bedside. She herself wheeled him into the adjoining room, to the window, with strands of ivy waving in and out in the gentle breeze, with the sun bright and the birds singing, and all the world warm and vivid and gay. Hiram's cheeks were wet with tears; they saw some tremendous emotion surging up in him. He looked at Arthur, at Adelaide, back to Arthur. Evidently he was trying to say something—something which he felt must be said. His right arm trembled, made several convulsive twitches, finally succeeded in lifting his right hand the few inches to the arm of the chair.

"What is it, father?" said Ellen.

"Yes—yes—yes," burst from him in thick, straining utterances. "Yes—yes—yes."

Mrs. Ranger wiped her eyes. "He is silent for hours," she said; "then he seems to want to say something. But when he speaks, it's only as just now. He says 'Yes—yes—yes' over and over again until his strength gives out."

The bursting of the blood vessels in his brain had torn out the nerve connection between the seat of power of speech and the vocal organs. He could think clearly, could put his thoughts into the necessary words; but when his will sent what he wished to say along his nerves toward the vocal organs, it encountered that gap, and could not cross it.

What did he wish to say? What was the message that could not get through, though he was putting his whole soul into it? At first he would begin again the struggle to speak, as soon as he had recovered from the last effort and failure; then the idea came to him that if he would hoard strength, he might gather enough to force a passage for the words—for he did not realize that the connection was broken, and broken forever. So, he would wait, at first for several hours, later for several days; and, when he thought himself strong enough or could no longer refrain, he would try to burst the bonds which seemed to be holding him. With his children, or his wife and children, watching him with agonized faces, he would make a struggle so violent, so resolute, that even that dead body was galvanized into a ghastly distortion of tortured life. Always in vain; always the same collapse of despair and exhaustion; the chasm between thought and speech could not be bridged. They brought everything they could think of his possibly wanting; they brought to his room everyone with whom he had ever had any sort of more than casual relations—Torrey, among scores of others. But he viewed each object and each person with the same awful despairing look, his immobile lips giving muffled passage to that eternal "Yes! Yes! Yes!" And at last they decided they were mistaken, that it was no particular thing he wanted, but only the natural fierce desire

to break through those prison walls, invisible, translucent, intangible, worse than death.

Sorrow and anxiety and care pressed so heavily and so unceasingly upon that household for several weeks that there was no time for, no thought of, anything but Hiram. Finally, however, the law of routine mercifully reasserted itself; their lives, in habit and in thought, readjusted, conformed to the new conditions, as human lives will, however chaotic has been the havoc that demolished the old routine. Then Adelaide took from her writing desk Ross's letters, which she had glanced at rather than read as they came; when she finished the rereading, or reading, she was not only as unsatisfied as when she began, but puzzled, to boot—and puzzled that she was puzzled. She read them again—it did not take long, for they were brief; even the first letter after he heard of her father's illness filled only the four sides of one sheet, and was written large and loose. "He has sent short letters," said she, "because he did not want to trouble me with long ones at this time." But, though this excuse was as plausible as most of those we invent to assist us to believe what we want to believe, it did not quite banish a certain hollow, hungry feeling, a sense of distaste for such food as the letters did provide. She was not experienced enough to know that the expression of the countenance of a letter is telltale beyond the expression of the countenance of its writer; that the face may be controlled to lie, but never yet were satisfying and fully deceptive lies told upon paper. Without being conscious of the action of the sly, subconscious instinct which prompted it, she began to revolve her friend, Theresa Howland, whose house party Ross was honoring with such an extraordinarily long lingering. "I hope Theresa is seeing that he has a good time," she said. "I suppose he thinks as he says—that he'd only be in the way here. That's a man's view! It's selfish, but who isn't selfish?"

Thus, without her being in the least aware of the process, her mind was preparing her for what was about to happen.

It is a poor mind, or poorly served by its subconscious half, that is taken wholly by surprise by any blow. There are always forewarnings; and while the surface mind habitually refuses to note them, though they be clear as sunset silhouettes, the subconscious mind is not so stupid—so blind under the sweet spells of that arch-enchanter, vanity.

At last Ross came, but without sending Adelaide word. His telegram to his mother gave just time for a trap to meet him at the station. As he was ascending the broad, stone approaches of the main entrance to the house at Point Helen, she appeared in the doorway, her face really beautiful with mother-pride. For Janet she cared as it is the duty of parent to care for child; Ross she loved. It was not mere maternal imagination that made her so proud of him; he was a distinguished and attractive figure of the kind that dominates the crowds at football games, polo and tennis matches, summer resort dances, and all those events which gather together the youth of our prosperous classes. Of the medium height, with a strong look about the shoulders, with sufficiently, though not aggressively, positive features and a clear skin, with gray-green eyes, good teeth, and a pleasing expression, he had an excellent natural basis on which to build himself into a particularly engaging and plausible type of fashionable gentleman. He was in traveling tweeds of pronounced plaid which, however, he carried off without vulgarity. His trousers were rolled high, after the fashion of the day, to show dark red socks of the same color as his tie and of a shade harmonious to the stripe in the pattern of shirt and suit and to the stones in his cuff links. He looked clean, with the cleanness of a tree after the measureless drenching of a storm; he had a careless, easy air, which completely concealed his assiduous and self-complacent self-consciousness. He embraced his mother with enthusiasm.

"How well you look!" he exclaimed; then, with a glance round, "How well *everything* looks!"

His mother held tightly to his arm as they went into the house; she seemed elder sister rather than mother, and

he delighted her by telling her so—omitting the qualifying adjective before the sister. "But you're not a bit glad to see me," he went on. "I believe you don't want me to come."

"I'm just a little cross with you for not answering my letters," replied she.

"How is Del?" he asked, and for an instant he looked embarrassed and curiously ashamed of himself.

"Adelaide is very well," was her reply in a constrained voice.

"I couldn't stay away any longer," said he. "It was tiresome up at Windrift."

He saw her disappointment, and a smile flitted over his face which returned and remained when she said: "I thought you were finding Theresa Howland interesting."

"Oh, you did?" was his smiling reply. "And why?"

"Then you have come because you were bored?" she said, evading.

"And to see you and Adelaide. I must telephone her right away."

It seemed to be secretly amusing him to note how downcast she was by this enthusiasm for Adelaide. "I shouldn't be too eager," counseled she. "A man ought never to show eagerness with a woman. Let the women make the advances, Ross. They'll do it fast enough—when they find that they must."

"Not the young ones," said Ross. "Especially not those that have choice of many men."

"But no woman has choice of many men," replied she. "She wants the best, and when *you're* in her horizon, you're the best, always."

Ross, being in the privacy of his own family, gave himself the pleasure of showing that he rather thought so himself. But he said: "Nonsense. If I listened to your partiality, I'd be making a fearful ass of myself most of the time."

"Well—don't let Adelaide see that you're eager," persisted his mother subtly. "She's very good-looking and knows it

and I'm afraid she's getting an exaggerated notion of her own value. She feels *so* certain of you."

"Of course she does," said Ross, and his mother saw that he was unmoved by her adroit thrust at his vanity.

"It isn't in human nature to value what one feels sure of."

"But she *is* sure of me," said Ross, and while he spoke with emphasis, neither his tone nor his look was quite sincere. "We're engaged, you know."

"A boy and girl affair. But nothing really settled."

"I've given my word and so has she."

Mrs. Whitney had difficulty in not looking as disapproving as she felt. A high sense of honor had been part of her wordy training of her children; but she had relied—she hoped, not in vain—upon their common sense to teach them to reconcile and adjust honor to the exigencies of practical life. "That's right, dear," said she. "A man or a woman can't be too honorable. Still, I should not wish you to make her and yourself unhappy. And I know both of you would be unhappy if, by marrying, you were to spoil each other's careers. And your father would not be able to allow or to leave you enough to maintain an establishment such as I've set my heart on seeing you have. Mr. Ranger has been acting very strange of late—almost insane, I'd say." Her tone became constrained as if she were trying to convey more than she dared put into words. "I feel even surer than when I wrote you, that he's leaving a large part of his fortune to Tecumseh College." And she related—with judicious omissions and embroideries—her last talk with Hiram, and the events that centered about it.

Ross retained the impassive expression he had been cultivating ever since he read in English "high life" novels descriptions of the bearing of men of the "*haut monde*." "That's of no consequence," was his comment, in a tone of indifference. "I'm not marrying Del for her money."

"Don't throw yourself away, Ross," said she, much disquieted. "I feel sure you've been brought up too sensibly to do anything reckless. At least, be careful how you commit yourself until you are sure. In our station people have to

think of a great many things before they think of anything so uncertain and so more or less fanciful as love. Rest assured, Adelaide is thinking of those things. Don't be less wise than she."

He changed the subject, and would not go back to it; and after a few minutes he telephoned Adelaide, ordered a cart, and set out to take her for a drive. Mrs. Whitney watched him depart with a heavy heart and so piteous a face that Ross was moved almost to the point of confiding in her what he was pretending not to admit to himself. "Ross is sensible beyond his years," she said to herself sadly, "but youth is *so* romantic. It never can see beyond the marriage ceremony."

Adelaide, with as much haste as was compatible with the demands of so important an occasion, was getting into a suitable costume. Suddenly she laid aside the hat she had selected from among several that were what the Fifth Avenue milliners call the "*dernier cri*." "No, I'll not go!" she exclaimed.

Ever since her father was stricken she had stayed near him. Ellen had his comfort and the household to look after, and besides was not good at initiating conversation and carrying it on alone; Arthur's tongue was paralyzed in his father's presence by his being unable for an instant to forget there what had occurred between them. So Del had borne practically the whole burden of filling the dreary, dragging hours for him —who could not speak, could not even show whether he understood or not. He had never been easy to talk to; now, when she could not tell but that what she said jarred upon a sick and inflamed soul, aggravating his torture by reminding him of things he longed to know yet could not inquire about, tantalizing him with suggestions— She dared not let her thoughts go far in that direction; it would soon have been impossible to send him any message beyond despairing looks.

Sometimes she kissed him. She knew he was separated from her as by a heavy, grated prison door, and was unable to feel the electric thrill of touch; yet she thought he must get

some joy out of the sight of the dumb show of caress. Again, she would give up trying to look cheerful, and would weep—and let him see her weep, having an instinct that he understood what a relief tears were to her, and that she let him see them to make him feel her loving sympathy. Again, she would be so wrought upon by the steady agony of those fixed eyes that she would leave him abruptly to hide herself and shudder, tearless, at the utter misery and hopelessness of it all. She wondered at her mother's calm until she noticed, after a few weeks, how the face was withering with that shriveling which comes from within when a living thing is dying at the core.

She read the Bible to him, selecting consolatory passages with the aid of a concordance, in the evenings after he had been lifted into bed for the night. She was filled with protest as she read; for it seemed to her that this good man, her best of fathers, thus savagely and causelessly stricken, was proof before her eyes that the sentences executed against men were not divine, but the devilish emanations of brute chance. "There may be a devil," she said to herself, frightened at her own blasphemy, "but there certainly is no God." Again, the Bible's promises, so confident, so lofty, so marvelously responsive to the longings and cravings of every kind of desolation and woe, had a soothing effect upon her; and they helped to put her in the frame of mind to find for conversation—or, rather, for her monologues to him—subjects which her instinct told her would be welcome visitors in that prison.

She talked to him of how he was loved, of how noble his influence had been in their lives. She analyzed him to himself, saying things she would never have dared say had there been the slightest chance of so much response as the flutter of an eyelid. And as, so it seemed to her, the sympathetic relations and understanding between them grew, she became franker, talked of her aspirations—new-born aspirations in harmony with his life and belief. And, explaining herself for his benefit and bringing to light her inmost being to show to him, she saw it herself. And when she one day said to him, "Your

"'I don't bother much about people I don't see.'"

illness has made a better woman of me, father, dear father," she felt it with all her heart.

It was from this atmosphere, and enveloped in it, that she went out to greet Ross; and, as she went, she was surprised at her own calmness before the prospect of seeing him again, after six months' separation—the longest in their lives.

His expression was scrupulously correct—joy at seeing her shadowed by sympathy for her calamity. When they were safely alone, he took her hand and was about to kiss her. Her beauty was of the kind that is different from, and beyond, memory's best photograph. She never looked exactly the same twice; that morning she seemed to him far more tempting than he had been thinking, with his head for so many weeks full of worldly ideas. He was thrilled anew, and his resolve hesitated before the fine pallor of her face, the slim lines of her figure, and the glimpses of her smooth white skin through the openwork in the yoke and sleeves of her blouse. But, instead of responding she drew back, just a little. He instantly suspected her of being in the state of mind into which he had been trying to get himself. He dropped her hand. A trifling incident, but a trifle is enough to cut the communications between two human beings; it often accomplishes what the rudest shocks would not. They went to the far, secluded end of the garden, he asking and she answering questions about her father.

"What is it, Del?" he said abruptly, at length. "You act strained toward me." He did not say this until she had been oppressed almost into silence by the height and the thickness of the barrier between them.

"I guess it's because I've been shut in with father," she suggested. "I've seen no one to talk to, except the family and the doctor, for weeks." And she tried to fix her mind on how handsome and attractive he was. As a rebuke to her heart's obstinate lukewarmness she forced herself to lay her hand in his.

He held it loosely. Her making this slight overture was

enough to restore his sense of superiority; his resolve grew less unsteady. "It's the first time," he went on, "that we've really had the chance to judge how we actually feel toward each other—that's what's the matter." His face—he was not looking at her—took on an expression of sad reproach. "Del, I don't believe you—care. You've found it out, and don't want to hurt my feelings by telling me." And he believed what he was saying. It might have been—well, not quite right, for him to chill toward her and contemplate breaking the engagement, but that she should have been doing the same thing—his vanity was erect to the last feather. "It's most kind of you to think so considerately of me," he said satirically.

She took her hand away. "And you?" she replied coldly. "Are your feelings changed?"

"I—oh, you know I love you," was his answer in a deliberately careless tone.

She laughed with an attempt at raillery. "You've been too long up at Windrift—you've been seeing too much of Theresa Howland," said she, merely for something to say; for Theresa was neither clever nor pretty, and Del hadn't it in her to suspect him of being mercenary.

He looked coldly at her. "I have never interfered with your many attentions from other men," said he stiffly. "On the contrary, I have encouraged you to enjoy yourself, and I thought you left me free in the same way."

The tears came to her eyes; and he saw, and proceeded to value still less highly that which was obviously so securely his.

"Whatever is the matter with you, Ross, this morning?" she cried. "Or is it I? Am I——"

"It certainly is not I," he interrupted icily. "I see you again after six months, and I find you changed completely."

A glance from her stopped him. "Oh!" she exclaimed, with a dangerous smile. "You are out of humor this morning and are seeking a quarrel."

"That would be impossible," he retorted. "*I* never quarrel. Evidently you have forgotten all about me."

Her pride would not let her refuse the challenge, convert in his words, frank in his eyes.

"Possibly," mocked she, forcing herself to look amusedly at him. "I don't bother much about people I don't see."

"You take a light view of our engagement," was his instant move.

"I should take a still lighter view," retorted she, "if I thought the way you're acting was a fair specimen of your real self."

This from Adelaide, who had always theretofore shared in his almost reverent respect for himself. Adelaide *judging* him, criticising *him*! All Ross's male instinct for unquestioning approval from the female was astir. "You wish to break our engagement?" he inquired, with a glance of cold anger that stiffened her pride and suppressed her impulse to try to gain time.

"You're free," said she, and her manner so piqued him, that to nerve himself to persist he had to think hard on the magnificence of Windrift and the many Howland millions and the rumored Ranger will. She, in a series of jerks and pauses, took off the ring; with an expression and a gesture that gave no further hint of how she had valued it, both for its own beauty and for what it represented, she handed it to him. "If that's all," she went on, "I'll go back to father." To perfect her pretense, she should have risen, shaken hands cheerfully with him, and sent him carelessly away. She knew it; but she could not.

He was not the man to fail to note that she made no move to rise, or to fail to read the slightly strained expression in her eyes and about the corners of her mouth. That betrayal lost Adelaide a triumph; for, seeing her again, feeling her beauty and her charm in all his senses, reminded of her superiority in brains and in taste to the women from whom he might choose, he was making a losing fight for the worldly wise course. "Anyhow, I must tame her a bit," he reflected, now that he was sure she would be his, should he find on further consideration that he wanted her rather than Theresa's

fortune. He accordingly took his hat, drew himself up, bowed coldly.

"Good morning," he said. And he was off, down the drive —to the lower end where the stableboy was guarding his trap —he was seated—he was driving away—he was gone—*gone!*

She did not move until he was no longer in sight. Then she rushed into the house, darted up to her room, locked herself in and gave way. It was the first serious quarrel she had ever had with him; it was so little like a quarrel, so ominously like a—No; absurd! It could not be a finality. She rejected that instantly, so confident had beauty and position as a prospective heiress made her as to her powers over any man she chose to try to fascinate, so secure was she in the belief that Ross loved her and would not give her up in any circumstances. She went over their interview, recalled his every sentence and look—this with surprising coolness for a young woman as deeply in love as she fancied herself. And her anger rose against him—a curious kind of anger, to spring and flourish in a loving heart. "He has been flattered by Theresa until he has entirely lost his point of view," she decided. "I'll give him a lesson when he comes trying to make it up."

He drove the part of his homeward way that was through streets with his wonted attention to "smartness." True "man of the world," he never for many consecutive minutes had himself out of his mind—how he was conducting himself, what people thought of him, what impression he had made or was making or was about to make. He estimated everybody and everything instinctively and solely from the standpoint of advantage to himself. Such people, if they have the intelligence to hide themselves under a pleasing surface, and the wisdom to plan, and the energy to execute, always get just about what they want; for intelligence and energy are invincible weapons, whether the end be worthy or not. As soon, however, as he was in the road up to the Bluffs, deserted at that hour, his body relaxed, his arms and hands dropped from the correct angle for driving, the reins lay loose upon the horse's back,

and he gave himself to dejection. He had thought—at Windrift—that, once he was free from the engagement which was no longer to his interest, he would feel buoyant, elated. Instead, he was mentally even more downcast a figure than his relaxed attitude and gloomy face made him physically. His mother's and his "set's" training had trimmed generous instincts close to the roots, and, also, such ideals as were not purely for material matters, especially for ostentation. But, being still a young man, those roots not only were alive, but also had an under-the-soil vigor; they even occasionally sent to the surface sprouts—that withered in the uncongenial air of his surroundings and came to nothing. Just now these sprouts were springing in the form of self-reproaches. Remembering with what thoughts he had gone to Adelaide, he felt wholly responsible for the broken engagement, felt that he had done a contemptible thing, had done it in a contemptible way; and he was almost despising himself, looking about the while for self-excuses. The longer he looked the worse off he was; for the more clearly he saw that he was what he called, and thought, in love with this fresh young beauty, so swiftly and alluringly developing. It exasperated him with the intensity of selfishness's avarice that he could not have both Theresa Howland's fortune and Adelaide. It seemed to him that he had a right to both. Not in the coldly selfish only is the fact of desire in itself the basis of right. By the time he reached home, he was angry through and through, and bent upon finding some one to be angry with. He threw the reins to a groom and, savagely sullen of face, went slowly up the terrace-like steps.

His mother, on the watch for his return, came to meet him. "How is Mr. Ranger this morning?" she asked.

"Just the same," he answered curtly.

"And—Del?"

No answer.

They went into the library; he lit a cigarette and seated himself at the writing table. She watched him anxiously but had far too keen insight to speak and give him the excuse to

explode. Not until she turned to leave the room did he break his surly silence to say: "I might as well tell you. I'm engaged to Theresa Howland."

"O Ross, I'm *so* glad!" she exclaimed, lighting up with pride and pleasure. Then, warned by his expression, she restrained herself. "I have felt certain for a long time that you would not throw yourself away on Adelaide. She is a nice girl—pretty, sweet, and all that. But women differ from each other only in unimportant details. A man ought to see to it that by marrying he strengthens his influence and position in the world and provides for the standing of his children. And I think Theresa has far more steadiness; and, besides, she has been about the world—she was presented at court last spring a year ago, wasn't she? She is *such* a lady. It will be so satisfactory to have her as the head of your establishment—probably Mr. Howland will give her Windrift. And her cousin—that Mr. Fanning she married—is connected with all the best families in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. They are at the top of our aristocracy."

This recital was not to inform, but to inspire—to remind him what a wise and brilliant move he had made in the game of life. And it had precisely the effect she intended. Had she not herself created and fostered in him the nature that would welcome such stuff as a bat welcomes night?

"I'm going back to Windrift to-morrow," he said, still sullen, but with the note of the quarrel-seeker gone from his voice.

"When do you wish me to write to her?"

"Whenever you like," he said. The defiance in his tone was for Adelaide. "The engagement is to be announced as soon as I get back."

Mrs. Whitney was called away, and Ross tried to write to Theresa. But the words wouldn't come. He wandered restlessly about the room, ordered the electric, went to the Country Club. After an hour of bitterness, he called up his mother. "You needn't send that note we were talking about just yet," he said.

"But I've already sent it," his mother answered. In fact, the note was just then lying on the table at her elbow.

"What were you in such a devil of a hurry for?" he stormed—an unnecessary question, for he knew his mother was the sort of person that loses no time in settling an important matter beyond possibility of change.

"I'm sorry, Ross," she replied soothingly. "I thought I might as well send it, as you had told me everything was settled."

"Oh — all right — no matter." He could break with Theresa whenever he wished. Perhaps he would not wish to break with her; perhaps, after a few days he would find that his feeling for Adelaide was in reality no stronger than he had thought it at Windrift, when Theresa was tempting him with her huge fortune. There was plenty of time before it would be necessary to make final choice.

Nevertheless, he did not leave Saint X, but hung round, sour and morose, hoping for some sign from "tamed" Adelaide.

As soon as Theresa got Mrs. Whitney's note, she wrote to Adelaide. "I've promised not to tell," her letter began, "but I never count any promise of that kind as including *you,* dear, sweet Adelaide——"

Adelaide smiled as she read this; Theresa's passion for intimate confession had been the joke of the school. "Besides," Adelaide read on, "I think you'll be especially interested as Ross tells me there was some sort of a boy-and-girl flirtation between you and him. I don't see how you could get over it. Now—you've guessed. Yes—we're engaged, and will probably be married up here in the fall—Windrift is simply divine then, you know. And I want you to be my 'best man.' The others'll be Edna and Clarice and Leila and Annette and perhaps Jessie and Anita. We're to live in Chicago—father will give us a house, I'm sure. And you must come to visit us——"

It is hardly fair to eavesdrop upon a young woman in such

an hour as this of Adelaide's. Only those might do so who are willing freely to concede to others that same right to be human which they themselves exercise, whether they will or no, when things happen that smash the veneer of "gentleman" or "lady" like an eggshell under a plowboy's heel, and penetrate to and roil that unlovely human nature which is in us all. Criticism is supercilious, even when it is just; so, without criticism, the fact is recorded that Adelaide paced the floor and literally raved in her fury at this double-distilled, double treachery. The sense that she had lost the man she believed she loved was drowned in the oceanic flood of infuriated vanity. She raged now against Ross and now against Theresa "She's marrying him just because she's full of envy, and can't bear to see anybody else have anything," she fumed. "Theresa couldn't love anybody but herself. And he—he's marrying her for her money. She isn't good to look at; to be in the house with her is to find out how mean and small and vain she is. It serves me right for being snob enough to have such a friend. If she hadn't been immensely rich and surrounded by such beautiful things I'd never have had anything to do with her. She's buying him; he's selling himself. How vile!"

But the reasons why they were betraying her did not change or mitigate the fact of betrayal; and that fact showed itself to proud, confident Adelaide Ranger in the form of the proposition that she had been jilted, and that all the world, all her world, would soon know it. Jilted! She—Adelaide Ranger—the all-conqueror—flung aside, flouted, jilted. She went back to that last word; it seemed to concentrate all the insult and treason and shame that were heaped upon her. And she never once thought of the wound to her heart; the fierce fire of vanity seemed to have cauterized it—if there was a wound.

What could she do to hide her disgrace from her mocking, sneering friends? For, hide it she must—must—*must*! And she had not a moment to lose.

A little thought, and she went to the telephone and called up her brother at the Country Club. When she heard his

voice, in fear and fright, demanding what she wanted, she said:

"Will you bring Dory Hargrave to dinner to-night? And, of course, don't let him know I wanted you to."

"Is *that* all!" exclaimed Arthur in a tone of enormous relief, which she was too absorbed in her calamity to be conscious of.

"You will, won't you? Really, Arthur, it's *very* important; and don't say a *word* of my having telephoned—not to *anybody*."

"All right! I'll bring him." A pause, then. "Father's just the same?"

"Yes," she answered, in sudden confusion and shame.

CHAPTER VIII

A FRIEND IN NEED

N the turmoil of his own affairs Arthur forgot his promise almost while he was making it. Fortunately, as he was driving home, the sight of Dr. Hargrave, marching absent-mindedly along near the post office, brought it to his mind again. With an impatient exclamation —for he prided himself upon fidelity to his given word, in small matters as well as in larger—he turned the horse about. He liked Dory Hargrave, and in a way admired him; Dory was easily expert at many of the sports at which Arthur had had to toil before he was able to make even a passable showing. But Dory, somehow, made him uncomfortable. They had no point of view in common; Dory regarded as incidental and trivial the things which seemed of the highest importance to Arthur. Dory had his way to make in the world; Arthur had been spared that discomfort and disadvantage. Yet Dory persisted in pretending to regard Arthur as in precisely the same position as himself; once he had even carried the pretense to the impertinence of affecting to sympathize with Arthur for being so sorely handicapped. On that occasion Arthur had great difficulty in restraining plain speech. He would not have been thus tactful and gentlemanly had he not realized that Dory meant the best in the world, and was wholly unconscious that envy was his real reason for taking on such a preposterous pose. "Poor chap!" Arthur had reflected. "One shouldn't blame him for snatching at any consolation, however flimsy." In those days Arthur often, in generous mood, admitted—to himself—that fortune had been shamefully

partial in elevating him, without any effort on his part, but merely by the accident of birth, far above the overwhelming majority of young men. He felt doubly generous—in having such broad views and in not aggravating the misfortunes of the less lucky by expressing them.

Dr. Hargrave and his son—his only child—and his dead wife's sister, Martha Skeffington, lived in a quaint old brick house in University Avenue. A double row of ancient elms shaded the long walk straight up from the gate. On the front door was a huge bronze knocker which Arthur lifted and dropped several times without getting response. "Probably the girl's in the kitchen; and old Miss Skeffington is so deaf she couldn't hear," he thought. He had known the persons and the habits of that household from earliest boyhood. He followed the path round the house and thus came in sight of a small outbuilding at the far corner of the yard, on the edge of the bank overlooking and almost overhanging the river—Dory's "workshop." Its door was open and Arthur could see the whole of the interior. Dory and a young woman were standing by a bench at the window, were bending over something in which they seemed to be absorbed. Not until Arthur stepped upon the doorsill did they lift their heads.

"Hello, Artie!" cried Dory, coming forward with extended hand.

Arthur was taking off his hat and bowing to the young woman. "Hello, Theo," said he. "How d'ye do, Estelle?"

Miss Wilmot shook hands with him, a shade constrainedly. "How are you, Arthur?" she said.

It was in his mouth to ask why she hadn't been to see Adelaide. He checked himself just in time. She and Adelaide were great friends as youngsters at the public school, but the friendship cooled into acquaintance as Adelaide developed fashionable ideas and tastes. Also, Estelle had been almost a recluse since she was seventeen. The rest of the Wilmots went into Saint X's newly developed but flourishing fashionable society. They had no money to give return entertainments or even to pay their share of the joint dances and card parties

and picnics; they looked rather queer, too, because their clothes were not merely old but ancient—no great matter, however, as they undoubtedly had most charming manners and a subtle pride that made everyone have a sense of being honored when they came. But Estelle, as soon as she was old enough to understand social relations, flatly refused to take where she could never give any but the debatable return of the honor of her company. She made no display of her different notion of pride; she simply held aloof; and, without her intending it, Saint X understood.

"What's that you've got there?" said Arthur, with a glance at the objects on the transformed carpenter's bench.

"Dory and I were looking at some flowers through a microscope," explained Estelle.

"Oh, yes," said Arthur, "I took a course in that last year. I liked it for a while; but it soon got to be a good deal of a bore."

He thought he saw a fleeting flash of a smile in Estelle's handsome eyes. As she had wavy golden hair and regular, "patrician" features and a notable figure, he reddened a little. "I had to do it, you see," he explained. "And anything one has to do becomes a bore." To himself he was saying: "These two prigs! She's pretending to be interested because she wants to make him think she's clever and 'serious.' And probably he does it to show off, too." He was not quite so certain of Dory's motive as of hers, because Dory had deliberately abandoned sports, which were far more showy than science and in which he brilliantly excelled, for things that impress only people not worth impressing—people who couldn't advance one socially in any way. But that Estelle was "faking" he hadn't the slightest doubt; one of his earliest discoveries in the exploration of the feminine mystery had been the American feminine passion for the "serious" pose, and much amusement he had got in verifying his theory that women never did anything before men except for effect.

Dory had been looking intently at him, and now smiled. It gave Arthur an uncomfortable sense that his thoughts had

been read, and that Dory was affecting to find his conclusions amusing. This suspicion became certainty when Dory said: "Don't be too hard on us, Artie. We who have to live quiet lives must put in the time somehow. And something can be said for the microscope. To me, it's what spectacles are to a nearsighted man. The type soon gets small in the story of the world about us. We take the microscope and are able to read on."

"I'm satisfied with the part that's in big type," replied Arthur; and, with the masculine instinct, he looked at Estelle for approval.

But she had apparently not heard what either was saying. "The light's beginning to fade," she said to Dory. "I'll see you to-morrow." And, all but ignoring Arthur, she departed, both men watching her as she went along the grass toward the front gate. Dory was first to turn away.

"What a beauty she has grown up into!" said Arthur.

"Hasn't she, though!" assented Dory, busy putting away the microscope and the slides.

"I beg your pardon for having interrupted," pursued Arthur.

"Not at all," replied Dory carelessly. "I happened to see her walking in her garden, with nothing to do, and I asked her over."

"What's become of her brother, Arden?"

"Still drinking, and not so good-natured as he used to be. It's beginning to tell on him. He's getting a surly streak. That's the way it invariably is with those weak fellows who become drunkards."

"It's sad to see a fine old family like theirs on the down grade," said Arthur.

Dory shrugged his shoulders. "No sadder than to see anybody else running to seed. We're all old families, you know, and very superior ones. When you think of all that the human race has been through, you realize that every one that has survived must be very superior—the less sheltered, the more superior."

Arthur decided to sheer off. "I came to ask you to the house for sup—dinner to-night," said he. "It's lonely—just mother and Del and me. Come and cheer us up. Come along with me now."

Dory looked confused. "I'm afraid I can't," he all but stammered.

"Of course, I can't blame you for not caring about coming." This a politeness, for Arthur regarded his invitation as an honor.

"Oh, you didn't understand me," protested Dory. "I was thinking of something entirely different." A pause during which he seemed to be reflecting. "I'll be glad to come," he finally said.

"You needn't bother to dress," continued Arthur.

Dory laughed—a frank, hearty laugh that showed the perfect white teeth in his wide, humorous-looking mouth. "Dress!" said he. "My other suit is, if anything, less presentable than this; and they're all I've got, except the frock—and I'm miserable in that."

Arthur felt like apologizing for having thus unwittingly brought out young Hargrave's poverty. "You look all right," said he.

"Thanks," said Dory dryly, his eyes laughing at Arthur.

And, as a matter of fact, though Arthur had not been sincere, Dory did look "all right." It would have been hard for any drapery not to have set well on that strong, lithe figure. And his face—especially the eyes—was so compelling that he would have had to be most elaborately overdressed to distract attention from what he was to what he wore.

On the way to the Rangers, he let Arthur do the talking; and if Arthur had been noticing he would have realized that Dory was not listening, but was busy with his own thoughts. Also Arthur would have noticed that, as they came round from the stables to the steps at the end of the front veranda, and as Dory caught sight of Adelaide, half-reclining in the hammock and playing with Simeon, his eyes looked as if he had been suddenly brought from the darkness into the light.

"Here's Dory Hargrave, Del," cried Arthur, and went on into the house, leaving them facing each other.

"So glad you've come," said Adelaide, her tone and manner at their friendliest.

But as she faced his penetrating eyes, her composure became less assured. He looked straight at her until her eyes dropped—this while they were shaking hands. He continued to look, she feeling it and growing more and more uncomfortable.

"Why did you send for me?" he asked.

She would have liked to deny or to evade; but neither was possible. Now that he was before her she recalled his habit of compelling her always to be truthful not only with him but—what was far worse—also with herself. "Did Arthur tell you I asked him to bring you?" she said, to gain time.

"No," was his reply. "But, as soon as he asked me, I knew."

It irritated her that this young man who was not at all a "man of the world" should be able so easily to fathom her. She had yet to learn that "man of the world" means man of a very small and insignificant world, while Dory Hargrave had been born a citizen of the big world, the real world—one who understands human beings, because his sympathies are broad as human nature itself, and his eyes clear of the scales of pretense. He was an illustration of the shallowness of the talk about the loneliness of great souls. It is the great souls that alone are not alone. They understand better than the self-conscious, posing mass of mankind the weakness and the pettiness of human nature; but they also appreciate its other side. And in the pettiest creature, they still see the greatness that is in every human being, in every living thing for that matter, its majesty of mystery and of potentiality—mystery of its living mechanism, potentiality of its position as a source of ever-ascending forms of life. From the protoplasmal cell descends the genius; from the loins of the sodden toiler chained to the soil springs the mother of genius or genius itself. And where little people were bored and isolated, Dory Hargrave

could without effort pass the barriers to any human heart, could enter in and sit at its inmost hearth, a welcome guest. He never intruded; he never misunderstood; he never caused the slightest uneasiness lest he should go away to sneer or to despise. Even old John Skeffington was confidential with him, and would have been friendly had not Dory avoided him.

Adelaide soon fell under the spell of this genius of his for inspiring confidence. She had not fully disclosed her plans to herself; she hesitated at letting herself see what her fury against Theresa and Ross had goaded her on to resolve. So she had no difficulty in persuading herself that she had probably sent for Dory chiefly to consult with him. "There's something I want to talk over with you," said she; "but wait till after din—supper. Have you and Artie been playing tennis?"

"No, he found me at home. Estelle Wilmot and I were playing with a microscope."

"Estelle—she has treated me shamefully," said Adelaide. "I haven't seen her for more than a year—except just a glimpse as I was driving down Monroe Street one day. How beautiful she has become! But, then, she always was pretty. And neither her father nor her mother, nor any of the rest of the family is especially good-looking. She doesn't in the least resemble them."

"There probably was a time when her father and mother really loved," said Dory. "I've often thought that when one sees a beautiful man or woman, one is seeing the monument to some moment of supreme, perfect happiness. There are hours when even the meanest creatures see the islands of enchantment floating in the opal sea."

Adelaide was gazing dreamily into the sunset. It was some time before she came back, dropped from the impersonal to the personal, which is the normal attitude of most young people and of all the self-absorbed. Simeon, who had been inspecting Dory from the far upper end of the hammock, now descended to the floor of the veranda, and slowly advanced toward him. Dory put out his hand. "How are you,

cousin?" he said, gravely shaking Simeon's extended paw. Simeon chattered delightedly and sprang into Dory's lap to nestle comfortably there.

"I always thought you would fall in love with Estelle, some day," Adelaide was saying.

Dory looked at Simeon with an ironical smile. "Why does she say those things to me?" he asked. Simeon looked at Adelaide with a puzzled frown that said, "Why, indeed?"

"You and Estelle are exactly suited to each other," explained she.

"Exactly unsuited," replied he. "I have nothing that she needs; she has nothing that I need. And love is an exchange of needs. Now, I have hurt your vanity."

"Why do you say that?" demanded Adelaide.

"You'd like to feel that your lover came to you empty-handed, asking everything, humbly protesting that he had nothing to give. And you know that I—" He smiled soberly. "Sometimes I think you have really nothing I need or want, that I care for you because you so much need what I can give. You poor pauper, with the delusion that you are rich!"

"You are frank," said she, smiling, but not liking it.

"And why shouldn't I be? I've given up hope of your ever seeing the situation as it is. I've nothing to lose with you. Besides, I shouldn't want you on any false terms. One has only to glance about him to shrink from the horrors of marriage based on delusions and lies. So, I can afford to be frank."

She gave him a puzzled look. She had known him all her life; they had played together almost every day until she was seventeen and went East, to school, with Janet Whitney. It was while she was at home on her first long vacation that she had flirted with him, had trapped him into an avowal of love; and then, having made sure of the truth which her vanity of conquest and the fascination of his free and frank manliness for her, though she denied it to herself, had led her on to discover beyond doubt, she became conscience-stricken. And she confessed to him that she loved Ross Whitney and was engaged to him; and he had taken the disclosure so calmly,

that she almost thought he, like herself, had been simply flirting. And yet— She dimly understood his creed of making the best of the inevitable, and of the ridiculousness of taking oneself too seriously. "He probably has his own peculiar way of caring for a woman," she was now reflecting, "just as he has his own peculiar way in every other respect."

Arthur came, and their mother; and not until long after supper, when her father had been got to bed, did she have the chance to continue the conversation. As soon as she appeared on the veranda, where Dory and Arthur were smoking, Arthur sauntered away. She was alone with Dory; but she felt that she had nothing to say to him. The surge of fury against Ross and Theresa had subsided; also, now that she had seen Theodore Hargrave again, she realized that he was not the sort of man one tries to use for the purpose she had on impulse formed, nor she the sort of woman who, in the deliberateness of the second thought, carries into effect an impulse to such a purpose.

When they had sat there in the moonlight several minutes in silence, she said: "I find I haven't anything especial to say to you, after all."

A wait, then from him: "I'm sorry. I had hoped—" He halted.

"Hoped—what?"

"Hoped it was off with you and Whitney."

"Has some one been saying it was?" she asked sharply.

"No. I thought I felt it when I first saw you."

"Oh!" she said, enormously relieved. A pause, then constrainedly, "Your guess was right."

"And was that why you sent for me?"

The assent of silence.

"You thought perhaps you might—care for—me?"

It seemed almost true, with him looking so earnestly and hopefully at her, and in the moonlight—moonlight that can soften even falsehood until true and false seem gently to merge. She hesitated to say No. "I don't know just what I thought," she replied.

But her tone jarred on the young man whose nerves were as sensitive as a thermostat. "You mean, when you saw me again, you felt you really didn't care," he said, drawing back so that she could not see his face.

"No," she replied, earnestly and honestly. "Not that." And then she flung out the truth. "Ross has engaged himself to Theresa Howland, a girl with a huge big fortune. And I—I——"

"You needn't say it," he interrupted, feeling how it was distressing her to confess. "I understand."

"I wasn't altogether—wicked," she pleaded. "I didn't think of you wholly because I thought you cared for me. I thought of you chiefly because I feel more at home with you than with anyone else. It has always seemed to me that you see me exactly as I am, with all the pretenses and meannesses —yet not unkindly, either. And, while you've made me angry sometimes, when you have refused to be taken in by my best tricks, still it was as one gets angry with—with oneself. It simply wouldn't last. And, as you see, I tell you anything and everything."

"You thought you'd engage yourself to me—and see how it worked out?"

"I'm afraid I did."

A pause. She knew what he was going to say next, and waited for him to say it. At last it came. "Well, now that there's no deception, why shouldn't you?"

"Somehow, I don't seem to mind—about Ross, so much. It—it was while I was in with father this evening. You haven't seen him since he became so ill, but you will understand why he is a rebuke to all mean thoughts. I suppose I'll be squirming again to-morrow, but to-night I feel——"

"That Ross has done you a great service. That you've lost nothing but a dangerous illusion; that you have been honorable with him, and all the wrong and the shame are upon him. You must feel it, for it is true."

Adelaide sighed. "I wish I were strong enough to feel it with my friends jeering at me, as I can feel it now, Dory."

He moved nearer the hammock in which she was sitting. "Del," he said, "shall we become engaged, with the condition that we'll not marry unless we both wish to, when the time comes?"

"But you're doing this only to help me—to help me in a weakness I ought to be ashamed of."

"Not altogether," he replied. "You on your part give me a chance to win you. You will look at me differently—and there's a great deal in that, a very great deal, Del."

She smiled—laughed. "I see what you mean."

But he looked gravely at her. "You promise to do your best to care? An engagement is a very solemn thing, Del. You promise?"

She put out her hand. "Yes," she answered. And, after a moment, in tones he would have known meant opportunity had he been less in love with her, less modest about his own powers where she was concerned, she went on: "The night you told me you loved me I did not sleep. What you said—what I saw when you opened your heart to me—oh, Dory, I believed then, and I believe now, that the reason I have not loved you is because I am not worthy of you. And I'm afraid I never can—for just that reason."

He laughed and kissed her hand. "If *that's* all that stands in the way," said he, "you'll love me to distraction."

Her spirits went soaring as she realized that she had gained honorably all she had been tempted to gain by artifice. "But you said a while ago," she reminded him mischievously, "that you didn't need me."

"So I did," said he, "but the fox shouldn't be taken too literally as he talks about the grapes that are out of reach."

Suddenly she was longing for him to take her in his arms and compel her to feel, and to yield to, his strength and his love. But he, realizing that he was in danger of losing his self-control, released her hand and drew away—to burn aloof, when he might have set her on fire.

Ross Whitney found his cousin, Ernest Belden, in the Chi-

cago express next morning. When they were well on their way, Belden said: "I'm really sorry it's all off between you and Adelaide, Ross."

Ross was silent, struggling against curiosity. Finally curiosity won. "How did you know, Ernest?" he asked.

"On the way to the station I met Dory Hargrave looking like a sunrise. I asked him what was up—you know, he and I are like brothers. And he said: 'I've induced Adelaide Ranger to promise to marry me.' 'Why, I never knew *you* cared about her in that way,' said I. And he said: 'There's lots of things in this world you don't know, Ernest, a lot of *important* things, and this is one of 'em. I've never cared about anybody else.'"

Belden had been thinking that the engagement between Ross and Adelaide was dissolved by mutual consent. A glance at Ross and he changed his mind; for, Ross was so amazed at Adelaide's thus challenging him—it could be nothing more than an audacious challenge—that he showed it. "I beg your pardon, old man," Belden said impulsively. "I didn't appreciate that I was making a prying brute of myself."

Ross decided that a "gentleman" would be silent under the suspicion of having been jilted, and that therefore *he* must be silent—on that subject. "Not at all," said he. "I suppose you haven't heard yet that I'm engaged to Miss Howland, of Chicago."

"Ah— Really— I congratulate you," said Belden.

And Ross, seeing that his cousin understood precisely what he had intended he should, felt meaner than ever.

CHAPTER IX

THE LONG FAREWELL

NOT until Adelaide told Arthur and saw the expression that succeeded his first blank stare of incredulity did she realize what the world, her "world," would think of her engagement to Theodore Hargrave. It was illuminative of her real character and of her real mind as to Ross, and as to Dory also, that, instead of being crushed by her brother's look of downright horror, she straightway ejected the snobbish suggestions with which her vanity had been taunting her, and called her heart, as well as her pride, to the defense of Dory.

"You're joking," said Arthur, when he was able to articulate; "and a mighty poor joke it is. Dory! Why, Del, it's ridiculous. And in place of Ross Whitney!"

"Be careful what you say, Artie," she warned in a quiet, ominous tone, with that in her eyes which should in prudence have halted him. "I am engaged to Dory, remember."

"Nonsense!" cried Arthur. "Why, he hasn't a cent, except his beggarly salary as professor at that little jay college. And even if he should amount to something some day, he'll never have anything or any standing in society. I thought you had pride, Del. Just wait till I see him! I'll let him know what I think of his impudence. Of course, I don't blame him. Naturally, he wants to get up in the world. But *you*—" Arthur's laugh was a sneer— "And I thought you were *proud*!"

From Del's eyes blazed that fury which we reserve for those we love when they exasperate us. "Shame on you, Ar-

thur Ranger!" she exclaimed. "Shame on you! See what a snob you have become. Except that he's poor, Dory Hargrave has the advantage of any man we know. He's got more in his head any minute than you or your kind in your whole lives. And he is honorable and a gentleman—a *real* gentleman, not a pretender. You aren't big enough to understand him; but, at least, you know that if it weren't for your prospects from father, you wouldn't be in the same class with him. *He* is somebody in himself. But you—and—and your kind —what do *you* amount to, in yourselves?"

Arthur lowered at her. "So this is what you've been leading up to, with all the queer talk you've been giving me on and off, ever since we came home."

That remark seemed to Adelaide for an instant to throw a flood of light in amazing revelation upon her own innermost self. "I believe it is!" she exclaimed, as if dazed. Then the light seemed to go, seemed to have been only imaginary. It is not until we are much older than Del then was, that we learn how our acts often reveal us to ourselves.

"So you're in love with Dory," scoffed Arthur. "You're a wonder—you are! To go about the world and get education and manners and culture, and then to come back to Saint X and take up with a jay—a fellow that's never been anywhere."

"Physically, he hasn't traveled much," said Del, her temper curiously and suddenly restored. "But mentally, Artie, dear, he's been distances and to places and in society that your poor brain would ache just at hearing about."

"You've lost your senses!"

"No, dear," replied Del sweetly; "on the contrary, I've put myself in the way of finding them."

"You needn't 'bluff' with me," he retorted. He eyed her suspiciously. "There's some mystery in this."

Del showed that the chance shot had landed; but, instantly recovering herself, she said: "It may interest you to know that a while ago, when I told you I was engaged to him, I felt a little uneasy. You see, I've had a long course at the

same school that has made such a gentleman of you. But, as the result of your talk and the thoughts it suggested, I haven't a doubt left. I'd marry Dory Hargrave now, if everybody in the world opposed me. Yes, the more opposition, the prouder I'll be to be his wife!"

"What's the matter, children?" came in their mother's voice. "What are you quarreling about?" Mrs. Ranger was hurrying through the room on her way to the kitchen; she was too used to heated discussions between them to be disturbed.

"What do you think of this, mother?" almost shouted Arthur. "Del here says she's engaged to Dory Hargrave!"

Mrs. Ranger stopped short. "Gracious!" she ejaculated.

She felt for her "specs," drew them down from her hair, and hastily adjusted them for a good look, first at Arthur, then at Del. She looked long at Del, who was proudly erect and was at her most beautiful best, eyes glittering and cheeks aglow. "Have you and Ross had a falling out, Del?" she asked.

"No, mother," replied Adelaide; "but we—we've broken our engagement, and— What Artie says is true."

No one spoke for a full minute, though the air seemed to buzz with the thinking and feeling. Then, Mrs. Ranger: "Your father mustn't hear of this."

"Leave me alone with mother, Artie," commanded Adelaide.

Arthur went, pausing in the doorway to say: "I'm sorry to have hurt you, Del. But I meant every word, only not in anger or meanness. I know you won't do it when you've thought it over."

When Arthur had had time to get far enough away, Adelaide said: "Mother, I want you to hear the whole truth—or as much of it as I know myself. Ross came and broke off our engagement so that he could marry Theresa Howland. And I've engaged myself to Dory—partly to cover it, but not altogether, I hope. Not principally, I believe. I'm sick and ashamed of the kind of things I've been so crazy about these

last few years. Before this happened, before Ross came, being with father and thinking over everything had made me see with different eyes. And I—I want to try to be—what a woman ought to be."

Ellen Ranger slowly rolled her front hair under her fingers. At length she said: "Well—I ain't sorry you've broke off with Ross. I've been noticing the Whitneys and their goings on for some time. I saw they'd got clean out of *my* class, and —I'm glad my daughter hasn't. There's a common streak in those Whitneys. I never did like Ross, though I never would have said anything, as you seemed to want him, and your father had always been set on it, and thought so high of him. He laid himself out to make your pa think he was a fine character and full of business—and I ain't denying that he's smart, mighty smart—too smart to suit me." A long reflective pause, then: "But—Dory— Well, my advice is to think it over before you jump clear in. Of course, you'll have enough for both, but I'd rather see you taking up with some man that's got a good business. Teachin' 's worse than preachin' as a business. Still, there's plenty of time to think about that. You're only engaged."

"Teachin' 's worse than preachin' "— Adelaide's new, or, rather, revived democracy was an aspiration rather than an actuality, was—as to the part above the soil, at least—a not very vigorous looking forced growth through sordid necessity. In this respect it was like many, perhaps most, human aspirations—and, like them, it was far more likely to wither than to flourish. "Teachin' 's worse than preachin' "— Del began to slip dismally down from the height to which Arthur's tactless outburst had blown her. Down, and down, and down, like a punctured balloon—gently, but steadily, dishearteningly. She was ashamed of herself, as ashamed as any reader of these chronicles is for her—any reader with one standard for judging other people and another for judging himself. To the credit of her character must be set down her shame at her snobbishness. The snobbishness itself should not be set down to her discredit, but should be charged up to that

class feeling, as old as property, and fostered and developed by almost every familiar fact in our daily environment.

"I shouldn't be surprised but your father'd be glad, if he knew," her mother was saying. "But it's no use to risk telling him. A shock might—might make him worse." She started up. "I must go to him. I came to send you, while I was looking after Mary and the dinner, and I clean forgot."

She hurried away. Adelaide sat thinking, more and more forlorn, though not a whit less determined. "I ought to admire him more than I did Ross, and I ought to want to marry him—and I *will*!"

The birds had stopped singing in the noonday heat. The breeze had died down. Outdoors, in the house, there was not a sound. She felt as if she must not, could not breathe. The silence, like a stealthy hand, lifted her from her chair, drew her tiptoeing and breathless toward the room in which her father was sitting. She paused at its threshold, looked. There was Hiram, in his chair by the window, bolt upright, eyes open and gazing into the infinite. Beside that statue of the peace eternal knelt Ellen, a worn, wan, shrunken figure, the hands clasped, the eyes closed, the lips moving.

"Mother! Mother!" cried Del.

Her mother did not hear. She was moaning, "I believe, Lord, I believe! Help Thou my unbelief!"

CHAPTER X

"THROUGH LOVE FOR MY CHILDREN"

N the day after the funeral, Mrs. Ranger and the two children and young Hargrave were in the back parlor, waiting for Judge Torrey to come and read the will. The well-meant intrusions, the services, the burial—all those barbarous customs that stretch on the rack those who really love the dead whom society compels them publicly to mourn—had left cruel marks on Adelaide and on Arthur; but their mother seemed unchanged. She was talking incessantly now, addressing herself to Dory, since he alone was able to heed her. Her talk was an almost incoherent stream, as if she neither knew nor cared what she was saying so long as she could keep that stream going—the stream whose sound at least made the voice in her heart, the voice of desolation, less clear and terrible, though not less insistent.

There was the beat of a man's footsteps on the side veranda. Mrs. Ranger started up, listened, sat again. "Oh," she said, in the strangest tone, and with a hysterical little laugh, "I thought it was your father coming home to dinner!" Then from her throat issued a stifled cry like nothing but a cry borne up to the surface from a deep torture-chamber. And she was talking on again—with Adelaide sobbing and Arthur fighting back the tears. Hargrave went to the door and admitted the old lawyer.

He had a little speech which he always made on such occasions; but to-day, with the knowledge of the astounding contents of that will on his mind, his lips refused to utter it. He simply bowed, seated himself, and opened the document. The

old-fashioned legal phrases soon were steadying him as the harness steadies an uneasy horse; and he was monotonously and sonorously rolling off paragraph after paragraph. Except the judge, young Hargrave was the only one there who clearly understood what those wordy provisions meant. As the reading progressed Dory's face flushed a deep red which slowly faded, leaving him gray and haggard. His father's beloved project! *His* father's! To carry out his father's project, Arthur and Adelaide, the woman he loved and her brother, were to lose their inheritance. He could not lift his eyes. He felt that they were all looking at him, were hurling reproaches and denunciations.

Presently Judge Torrey read: "I make this disposal of my estate through my love for my children and because I have firm belief in the soundness of their character, and in their capacity to do and to be. I feel they will be better off without the wealth which would tempt my son to relax his efforts to make a useful man of himself and would cause my daughter to be sought for her fortune instead of for herself."

At the words "without the wealth," Arthur shifted sharply in his chair, and both he and Adelaide looked at Judge Torrey in puzzled wonder. The judge read on, read the names of signer and witnesses, then laid the will down and stared gloomily at it. Mrs. Ranger said: "And now, judge, can you tell us in plain words just what it means?"

With many a pause and stammer the old lawyer made it clear: the house and its contents and appurtenances, and seven thousand a year to the widow for life; two thousand a year to Adelaide; five thousand in cash to Arthur and the chance to earn the mill and factory; the rest, practically the whole estate, to Tecumseh University.

"Any further questions?" he asked, breaking the silence that followed his explanation.

No one spoke.

Still without looking at anyone, he put away his glasses. "Then I guess I'll be going. It won't be necessary to do anything further for a day or two."

And, with face like that of criminal slinking from scene of crime, he got himself to the door by a series of embarrassed bows and shuffling steps. Outside, he wiped the streaming sweat from his forehead. "It wasn't my fault," he muttered, as if some one were accusing him. Then, a little further from the house, "I ain't sure Hiram hasn't done right. But, God help me, I couldn't never save *my* children at such a price."

He was clear of the grounds before Adelaide, the first to move, cast a furtive glance at her brother. Her own disaster was swallowed up for her in the thought of how he had been struck down. But she could read nothing in his face. He was simply gazing straight ahead, and looking *so* like his father at his most unfathomable. As soon as he had fully realized what the will meant, his nerves had stopped feeling and his brain had stopped thinking. Adelaide next noted Dory, and grew cold from head to foot. All in a rush it came over her how much she had relied upon her prospective inheritance, how little upon herself. What would Dory think of her *now*? And Ross—what a triumph for him, what a narrow escape! Had he suspected? Had others in the town known that of which they of the family were in complete ignorance? Oh, the horror of the descent—the horror of the rude snatching away of the golden aureole! "Father, father, how could you do it? How could you hurt us so?" she muttered. Then, up before her rose his face with that frightful look in the eyes. "But how doing it made *him* suffer!" she thought. And the memory of those hours on hours she had spent with him, buried alive, flooded over her. "Doing it killed him!" she said to herself.

She felt cruel fingers grinding into her arm. With a sharp cry she sprang up. Her brother was facing her, his features ablaze with all the evil passions in his untrained and unrestrained nature. "*You knew!*" he hissed. "You traitor! You knew he was doing this. You honeyfugled him. And you and Hargrave get it all!"

Adelaide shrank as she would not have shrunk under a lash.

"O Arthur! Arthur!" she cried, clasping her hands and stretching them toward him.

"You admit it, do you?" he shouted, seizing her by the shoulders like a madman. "Yes, your guilty face admits it. But I'll undo your work. I'll break the will. Such an outrage as that, such a robbery, won't stand in court for a minute."

Dory had risen, was moving to fling the brother from the sister; but Mrs. Ranger was before him. Starting up from the stupor into which Judge Torrey's explanation had thrown her, she thrust herself between her children. "Arthur!" she said, and her voice was quiet and solemn. "Your father is dead." She drew herself up, and facing her son in her widow's black, seemed taller than he. "If I had needed any proof that he was right about what he did with his own," she went on, "I'd have found it in your face and in what you just said to your sister. Go to the glass there, boy! Look at your face and remember your words!"

Young Hargrave left the room, went to the garden where they could see him from the windows and call him if they wished. Arthur hung his head before his mother's gaze. "It isn't *his* will," he muttered. "Father in his right mind would never have made such a will."

"He never would have made such a will if his children had been in their right mind," replied his mother sternly; and sternness they had never before seen in those features or heard in that voice. "I know now what he was broodin' over for weeks. Yes—" and her voice, which rose shrill, was the shriek of the tempest within her—"and I know now what made him break so sudden. I noticed you both driftin' off into foolishness, ashamed of the ways of your parents, ashamed of your parents, too. But I didn't give no attention to it, because I thought it was the silliness of children and that you'd outgrow it. But *he* always did have a good head on him, and he saw that you were ridin' loose-rein to ruin—to be like them Whitneys. Your pa not in his right mind? I see *God* in that will."

She paused, but only for breath to resume: "And you,

Arthur Ranger, what was in your head when you came here to-day? Grief and love and willingness to carry out your dead father's last wishes? No! You came thinking of how you were to benefit by his death. Don't deny! I saw your face when you found you weren't going to get your father's money."

"Mother!" exclaimed Arthur.

She waved him down imperiously; and he was afraid before her, before her outraged love for her outraged dead. "Take care how you stamp on my Hiram's grave, Arthur Ranger!"

"He didn't mean it—you know he didn't," pleaded Adelaide. At that moment she could not think of this woman as her mother, but only as the wife, the widow.

But Ellen's instinct told her that her son, though silent, was still in traitorous rebellion against her idol. And she kept on at him: "With Hiram hardly out of the house, you've forgot all he did for you, all he left you—his good name, his good example. You think only of his money. I've heard you say children owe nothing to their parents, that parents owe everything to the children. Well, that's so. But it don't mean what you think. It don't mean that parents ought to *ruin* their children. And your pa didn't spare himself to do his duty by you—not even though it killed him. Yes, it killed him! You'd better go away and fall on your knees and ask God to forgive you for having shortened your father's life. And I tell you, Arthur Ranger, till you change your heart, you're no son of mine."

"Mother! Mother!" cried Arthur, rushing from the room.

Mrs. Ranger looked vacantly at the place where he had been, dropped into a chair and burst into a storm of tears.

"Call him back, mother," entreated Del.

"No! no!" sobbed Ellen Ranger. "He spoke agin' my dead! I'll not forgive him till his heart changes."

Adelaide knelt beside her mother and tried to put her arms around her. But her mother shrank away. "Don't

touch me!" she cried; "leave me alone. God forgive me for having bore children that trample on their father's grave. I'll put you both out of the house—" and she started up and her voice rose to a shriek. "Yes—I'll put you both out! Your foolishness has ate into you like a cancer, till you're both rotten. Go to the Whitneys. Go among the lepers where you belong. You ain't fit for decent people."

She pushed Adelaide aside, and with uncertain steps went into the hall and up toward her own room.

CHAPTER XI

"SO SENSITIVE"

ADELAIDE was about to go in search of her brother when he came hunting her. A good example perhaps excepted, there is no power for good equal to a bad example. Arthur's outburst before his mother and her, and in what seemed the very presence of the dead, had been almost as potent in turning Adelaide from bitterness as the influence her father's personality, her father's character had got over her in his last illness. And now the very sight of her brother's face, freely expressing his thoughts, since Ellen was not there to shame him, gave double force to the feelings her mother's denunciations had roused in her. "We've got to fight it, Del," Arthur said, flinging himself down on the grass at her feet. "I'll see Torrey to-morrow morning."

Adelaide was silent.

He looked fiercely at her. "You're going to help me, aren't you?"

"I must have time to think," she replied, bent on not provoking him to greater fury.

He raised himself to a sitting posture. "What has that Hargrave fellow been saying to you?" he cried. "You'll have to break off with him. His father—the old scoundrel!—got at father and took advantage of his illness and his religious superstition. I know just how it was done. We'll bring it all out."

Adelaide did not answer.

"What did Dory say to you?" repeated Arthur.

"He went as soon as I came out from mother," she replied. She thought it best not to tell him that Dory had

stopped long enough to urge her to go to her brother, and to make and keep peace with him, no matter what he might say to anger her. "Don't you think," she continued, "that you ought to see Janet and talk with her?"

Artie sank back and stared somberly at the ground.

"When is she coming?" asked his sister.

"I don't know," he answered surlily. "Not at all, perhaps. The Whitneys won't especially care about having any of us in the family now." He looked furtively at Adelaide, as if he hoped she would protest that he was mistaken, would show him that Janet would be unchanged.

"Mrs. Whitney won't," said Adelaide. "But Janet—she's different, I think. She seems to be high-minded, and I believe she loves you."

Arthur looked relieved, though Adelaide was too honest to have been able to make her tone as emphatic as her words. Yes, Janet was indeed high-minded, he said to himself; did indeed love him. Her high-mindedness and the angel purity of her love had often made him uneasy, not to say uncomfortable. He hated to be at the trouble of pretenses; but Janet, living on a far higher plan than he, had simply compelled it. To let her see his human weaknesses, to let her suspect that he was not as high-minded as she told him he was, to strip from himself the saintly robes and the diadem with which she had adorned him—well, he would put it off until after marriage, he had always told himself, and perhaps by that time he would feel a little less like a sinner profaning a sanctuary when he kissed her. He had from time to time found in himself a sinful longing that she were just a little less of an angel, just a little more of a fellow sinner—not too much, of course, for a man wants a pure wife, a pure mother for his children. But, while the attitudes of worship and of saintliness were cramped, often severely so, still on the whole Arthur had thought he was content with Janet just as she was.

"Why don't you go to Chicago and see her?" suggested Adelaide. "You ought to talk with her before anyone else has a chance. I wouldn't put *anything* past her mother."

"That's a good idea!" exclaimed Arthur, his face clearing before the prospect of action. "I'll take the night train. Yes, I must be the one to tell her."

Adelaide had a sense of relief. Arthur would see Janet; Janet would pour balm upon his wounds, would lift him up to a higher, more generous view. Then, whatever he might do would be done in the right spirit, with respect for the memory of their father, with consideration for their mother.

"You had better not see mother again until you come back," she suggested.

His face shadowed and shame came into it that was from the real Arthur Ranger, the son of Hiram and Ellen. "I wish I hadn't burst out as I did, Del," he said. "I forgot everything in my own wrongs. I want to try to make it all right with mother. I can't believe that I said what I remember I did say before her who'd be glad to die for us."

"Everything'll be all right when you come back, Artie," she assured him.

As they passed the outbuilding where the garden tools were kept they both glanced in. There stood the tools their father had always used in pottering about the garden, above them his old slouch and old straw hats. Arthur's lip quivered; Adelaide caught her breath in a sob. "O Artie," she cried brokenly, "He's gone—gone—gone for ever." And Artie sat on the little bench just within the door and drew Del down beside him, and, each tightly in the other's arms, they cried like the children that they were, like the children that we all are in face of the great tragedy.

A handsome and touching figure was Arthur Ranger as he left his cab and slowly ascended the lawn and the steps of the Whitney palace in the Lake Drive at eleven the next morning. His mourning garments were most becoming to him, contrasting with the fairness of his hair, the blue of his eyes, and the pallor of his skin. He looked big and strong and sad, and scrupulously fashionable, and very young.

The Whitneys were leading in Chicago in building broad

and ever broader the barriers, not between rich and poor, but between the very, very rich and all the rest of the world. Mrs. Whitney had made a painstaking and reverent study of upper-class life in England and on the Continent, and was endeavoring to use her education for the instruction of her associates, and for the instilling of a proper awe into the multitude. To enter her door was at once to get the impression that one was receiving a high privilege. One would have been as greatly shocked as was Mrs. Whitney herself, could one have overheard "Charley" saying to her, as he occasionally did, with a grin which he strove to make as "common" as he knew how, "Really, Tillie, if you don't let up a little on this putting on dog, I'll have to take to sneaking in by the back way. The butler's a sight more of a gent than I am, and the housekeeper can give you points on being a real, head-on-a-pole-over-the-shoulder lady." A low fellow at heart was Charley Whitney, like so many of his similarly placed compatriots, though he strove as hard as do they, almost as hard as his wife, to conceal the deficiencies due to early training in vulgarly democratic ways of living and thinking.

Arthur, ushered by the excruciatingly fashionable butler into the smallest of the series of reception *salons,* fell straightway into the most melancholy spirits. He felt the black, icy shadow of the beginnings of doubt as to his right to admittance on terms of equality, now that his titles to nobility had been torn from him and destroyed. He felt that he was in grave danger of being soon mingled in the minds of his fashionable friends and their servants with the vulgar herd, the respectable but "impossible" middle classes. Indeed, he was not sure that he didn't really belong among them. The sound of Janet's subdued, most elegant rustle, drove out of his mind everything but an awful dread of what she would say and think and feel when he had disclosed to her the hideous truth. She came sweeping in, her eyes full of unshed tears, her manner a model of refined grief, sympathetic, soothing. She was tall and slim, a perfect figure of the long, lithe type; her face was small and fine and dreamy; her hair of an unusual straw

color, golden, yet pale, too, like the latest autumn leaves in the wan sun of November; her eyes were hazel, in strange and thrilling contrast to her hair. To behold her was to behold all that man finds most fascinating in woman, but so illumined by the soul within that to look on it with man's eye for charms feminine seemed somewhat like casting sensuous glances upon beauty enmarbled in a temple's fane. Janet was human, but the human that points the way to sexless heaven.

"*Dear* Artie!" she said gently. "*Dear* Artie!" And she took both his hands and, as she looked at him, her tears fell. Arthur, in his new humility of poverty, felt honored indeed that any loss of his could cause her matchless soul thus to droop upon its dazzling outer walls the somber, showery insignia of grief. "But," she went on, "you have him still with you—his splendid, rugged character, the memory of all he did for you."

Arthur was silent. They were seated now, side by side, and he was, somewhat timidly, holding one of her hands.

"He was so simple and so honest—such a *man*!" she continued. "Does it hurt you, dear, for me to talk about him?"

"No—no," he stammered, "I came to you—to—to—talk about him." Then, desperately, seizing her other hand and holding both tightly, "Janet, would it make any difference with you if I—if I—no— What am I saying? Janet, I release you from our engagement. I—I—have no prospects," he rushed on. "Father— They got round him and wheedled him into leaving everything to the college—to Tecumseh. I have nothing—I must give you up. I can't ask you to wait—and——"

He could not go on. He longed for the throbbing, human touch that beauty of hers could make so thrilling. But she slowly drew away her hands. Her expression made him say:

"What is it, Janet? What have I said that hurt you?"

"Did you come," she asked, in a strange, distant voice, "because you thought your not having money would make a difference with me?"

"No," he protested, in wild alarm. "It was only that I feel I——"

"You feel that there could be a question of money between us?" she interrupted.

"Not between *us,* Janet," he said eagerly; "but there is your—your mother."

"I beg you," she replied coldly, "not to speak of mamma in that way to me, even if you have such unjust thoughts of her."

Arthur looked at her uncertainly. He had an instinct, deep down, that there was something wrong—something in her that he was not fathoming. But in face of that cloud-dwelling beauty, he could only turn and look within himself. "I beg your pardon, dear," he said. "You know so little of the practical side of life. You live so apart from it, so high above it, that I was afraid I'd be doing wrong by you if I did not put that side of it before you, too. But in the bottom of my heart I knew you would stand by me."

She remained cold. "I don't know whether I'm glad or sorry, Arthur, that you let me see into your real self. I've often had doubts about our understanding each other, about our two natures being in that perfect harmony which makes the true marriage. But I've shut out those doubts as disloyal to you. Now, you've forced me to see they were only too true!"

"What do you mean, Janet? Of course, I'm not good enough for you—no one is, for that matter; but I love you, and— Do you care for me, Janet?"

"Yes," she replied mournfully. "But I must conquer it. O Arthur, Arthur!" Her voice was tremulous now, and her strange hazel eyes streamed sorrowful reproach. "How could you think sordidly of what was sacred and holy to me, of what I thought was holy to us both? You couldn't, if you had been the man I imagined you were."

"Don't blame a fellow for every loose word he utters when he's all upset, Janet," he pleaded. "Put yourself in my place. Suppose you found you hadn't anything at all—found

it out suddenly, when all along you had been thinking you'd never have to bother about money? Suppose you— But you must know how the world, how all our friends, look on that sort of thing. And suppose you loved—just as I love you. Wouldn't you go to her and hope she'd brace you up and make you feel that she really loved you and—all that? Wouldn't you, Janet?"

She looked sadly at him. "You don't understand," she said, her rosebud mouth drooping pathetically. "You can't realize how you shook—how you *shattered*—my faith in you."

He caught her by the arms roughly. "Look here, Janet Whitney. Do you love me or don't you? Do you intend to throw me over, now that I have lost my money, or do you intend to be all you've pretended to be?"

The sadness in her sweet face deepened. "Let me go, Arthur," she said quietly. "You don't understand. You never will."

"Yes or no?" he demanded, shaking her. Then suddenly changing to tenderness, with all his longing for sympathy in his eyes and in his voice, "Janet—dear—yes or no?"

She looked away. "Don't persist, Arthur," she said, "or you will make me think it is only my money that makes you, that made you, pretend to—to care for me."

He drew back sharply. "Janet!" he exclaimed.

"Of course, I don't think so," she continued, after a constrained silence. "But I can't find any other reason for your talking and acting as you have this morning."

He tried to see from her point of view. "Maybe it's true," he said, "that other things than our love have had too much to do with it, with both of us, in the past. But I love you for yourself alone, now, Janet. And, you haven't a fortune of your own, but only expectations—and they're not always realized, and in your case can't be for many a year. So we don't start so unevenly. Give yourself to me, Janet. Show that you believe in me, and I know I shall not disappoint you."

Very manly his manner was as he said this, and brave and convincing was the show of his latent, undeveloped powers in

his features and voice. She hesitated, then lowered her head, and, in a sad, gentle voice, said, "I don't trust you, Arthur. You've cut away the foundation of love. It would be fine and beautiful for us to start empty-handed and build up together, if we were in sympathy and harmony. But, doubting you—I can't."

Again he looked at her uneasily, suspicious, without knowing why or what. But one thing was clear—to plead further with her would be self-degradation. "I have been tactless," he said to her. "Probably, if I were less in earnest, I should get on better. But, perhaps you will judge me more fairly when you think it over. I'll say only one thing more. I can't give up hope. It's about all I've got left—hope of you—belief in you. I must cling to that. I'll go now, Janet."

She said nothing, simply looked unutterable melancholy, and let her hand lie listlessly in his until he dropped it. He looked back at her when he reached the door. She seemed so sad that he was about to return to her side. She sighed heavily, gazed at him, and said, "Good-by, Arthur." After that he had no alternative. He went. "I must wait until she is calm," he said to himself. "She is so delicately strung."

As he was driving toward the hotel, his gloom in his face, he did not see Mrs. Whitney dash past and give him an anxious searching glance, and sink back in her carriage reassured somewhat. She had heard that he was on the Chicago express—had heard it from her *masseuse*, who came each morning before she was up. She had leaped to the telephone, had ordered a special train, and had got herself into it and off for her Chicago home by half-past eight. "That sentimental girl, full of high ideals—what mayn't she do!" she was muttering, almost beside herself with anxiety. "No doubt he'll try and induce her to run away with him." And the rushing train seemed to creep and crawl.

She burst into the house like a dignified whirlwind. "Where's Miss Janet?" she demanded of the butler.

"Still in the blue *salon*, ma'am, I think," he replied. "Mr. Arthur Ranger just left a few moments ago."

Clearing her surface of all traces of agitation, Mrs. Whitney went into the presence of her daughter. "Mamma!" cried Janet, starting up. "Has anything happened?"

"Nothing, nothing, dear," replied her mother, kissing her tenderly. "I was afraid my letter might have miscarried. And, when I heard that Arthur had slipped away to Chicago, I came myself. I've brought you up so purely and innocently that I became alarmed lest he might lead you into some rash sentimentality. As I said in my letter, if Arthur had grown up into a strong, manly character, I should have been eager to trust my daughter to him. But my doubts about him were confirmed by the will. And—he is simply a fortune-hunter now."

Janet had hidden her face in her handkerchief. "Oh, no!" she exclaimed. "You wrong him, mother."

"You haven't encouraged him, Janet!" cried Mrs. Whitney. "After what I've been writing you?"

"The loss of his money hasn't made any difference about him with me," said Janet, her pure, sweet face lighting up with the expression that made her mother half-ashamed of her own worldliness.

"Of course not! Of course not, Janet," said she. "No child of mine could be mercenary without being utterly false to my teachings."

Janet's expression was respectful, yet not confirmatory. She had often protested inwardly against the sordid views of life which her mother unconsciously held and veiled with scant decency in the family circle in her unguarded moments. But she had fought against the contamination, and proudly felt that her battle for the "higher plane" was successful.

Her mother returned, somewhat awkwardly, to the main point. "I hope you didn't encourage him, Janet."

"I don't wish to talk of it, mother," was Janet's reply. "I have not been well, and all this has upset me."

Mrs. Whitney was gnawing her palms with her nails and her lip with her teeth. She could scarcely restrain herself from seizing her daughter and shaking the truth, whatever it was,

out of her. But prudence and respect for her daughter's delicate soul restrained her.

"You have made it doubly hard for me," Janet went on. "Your writing me to stay away because there was doubt about Arthur's material future—oh, mother, how could that make any difference? If I had not been feeling so done, and if father hadn't been looking to me to keep him company, I'd surely have gone. For I hate to have my motive misunderstood."

"He has worked on her soft-heartedness and inexperience," thought Mrs. Whitney, in a panic.

"And when Arthur came to-day," the girl continued, "I was ready to fly to him." She looked tragic. "And even when he repulsed me——"

"*Repulsed* you!" exclaimed Mrs. Whitney. She laughed disagreeably. "He's subtler than I thought."

"Even when he repulsed me," pursued Janet, "with his sordid way of looking at everything, still I tried to cling to him, to shut my eyes."

Mrs. Whitney vented an audible sigh of relief. "Then you didn't let him deceive you!"

"He shattered my last illusion," said Janet, in a mournful voice. "Mother, I simply *couldn't* believe in him, in the purity of his love. I had to give him up."

Mrs. Whitney put her arms round her daughter and kissed her soothingly again and again. "Don't grieve, dear," she said. "Think how much better it is that you should have found him out now than when it was too late."

And Janet shuddered.

Ross dropped in at the house in the Lake Drive the next morning on his way East from the Howlands. As soon as he was alone with his mother, he asked, "How about Janet and Arthur?"

Mrs. Whitney put on her exalted expression. "I'm glad you said nothing before Janet," said she. "The child is so sensitive, and Arthur has given her a terrible shock. Men are

so coarse; they do not appreciate the delicateness of a refined woman. In this case, however, it was most fortunate. She was able to see into his true nature."

"Then she's broken it off? That's good."

"Be careful what you say to her," his mother hastened to warn him. "You might upset her mind again. She's so afraid of being misunderstood."

"She needn't be," replied Ross dryly.

And when he looked in on Janet in her sitting room to say good-by, he began with a satirical, "Congratulations, Jenny."

Jenny looked at him with wondering eyes. She was drooping like a sunless flower and was reading poetry out of a beautifully bound volume. "What is it, Ross?" she asked.

"On shaking Artie so smoothly. Trust you to do the right thing at the right time, and in the right way. You're a beauty, Jen, and no mistake," laughed Ross. "I never saw your like. You really must marry a title—Madame la Duchesse! And nobody's on to you but me. You aren't even on to yourself!"

Janet drew up haughtily and swept into her bedroom, closing the door with *almost* coarse emphasis.

CHAPTER XII

ARTHUR FALLS AMONG LAWYERS

RTHUR ended his far from orderly retreat at the Auditorium, and in the sitting room of his suite there set about re-forming his lines, with some vague idea of making another attack later in the day—one less timid and blundering. "I'd better not have gone near her," said he disgustedly. "How could a man win when he feels beaten before he begins?" He was not now hazed by Janet's beauty and her voice like bells in evening quiet, and her mystic ideas. Youth, rarely wise in action, is often wise in thought; and Arthur, having a reasoning apparatus that worked uncommonly well when he set it in motion and did not interfere with it, was soon seeing his situation as a whole much as it was—ugly, mocking, hopeless.

"Maybe Janet knows the real reason why she's acting this way, maybe she don't," thought he, with the disposition of the inexperienced to give the benefit of even imaginary doubt. "No matter; the fact is, it's all up between us." This finality, unexpectedly staring at him, gave him a shock. "Why," he muttered, "she really has thrown me over! All her talk was a blind—a trick." And, further exhibiting his youth in holding the individual responsible for the system of which the individual is merely a victim, usually a pitiable victim, he went to the opposite extreme and fell to denouncing her—cold-hearted and mercenary like her mother, a coward as well as a hypocrite—for, if she had had any of the bravery of self-respect, wouldn't she have been frank with him? He reviewed her in the flooding new light upon her character, this light that revealed her

as mercilessly as flash of night-watchman's lantern on guilty, shrinking form. "She— Why, she always *was* a fakir!" he exclaimed, stupefied by the revelation of his own lack of discernment, he who had prided himself on his acuteness, especially as to women. "From childhood up, she has always made herself comfortable, no matter who was put out; she has gotten whatever she wanted, always pretending to be unselfish, always making it look as if the other person were in the wrong." There he started up in the rage of the hoodwinked, at the recollection of an incident of the previous summer —how she had been most gracious to a young French nobleman, in America in search of a wife; how anybody but "spiritual" Janet would have been accused of outrageous flirting—no, not accused, but convicted. He recalled a vague story which he had set down to envious gossip—a story that the Frenchman had departed on learning that Charles Whitney had not yet reached the stage of fashionable education at which the American father appreciates titles and begins to listen without losing his temper when the subject of settlements is broached. He remembered now that Janet had been low-spirited for some time after the Frenchman took himself and title and eloquent eyes and "soulful, stimulating conversation" to another market. "What a damn fool I've been!" Arthur all but shouted at his own image in a mirror which by chance was opposite him. A glance, and his eyes shifted; somehow, it gave him no pleasure, but the reverse, to see that handsome face and well-set-up, well-dressed figure.

"She was marrying me for money," he went on, when he had once more seated himself, legs crossed and cigarette going reflectively. The idea seemed new to him—that people with money could marry for money, just as a capitalist goes only where he hopes to increase his capital. But on examining it more closely, he was surprised to find that it was not new at all. "What am I so virtuous about?" said he. "Wasn't *I* after money, too? If our circumstances were reversed, what would *I* be doing?" He could find but one honest answer. "No doubt I'd be trying to get out of it, and if I didn't, it'd

be because I couldn't see or make a way." To his abnormally sensitized nerves the whole business began to exude a distinct, nauseating odor. "Rotten—that's the God's truth," thought he. "Father was right!"

But there he drew back; he must be careful not to let anger sweep him into conceding too much. "No—life's got to be lived as the world dictates," he hastened to add. "I see now why father did it, but he went too far. He forgot my rights. The money is mine. And, by God, I'll get it!" And again he started up; and again he was caught and put out of countenance by his own image in the mirror. He turned away, shamefaced, but sullenly resolute.

Base? He couldn't deny it. But he was desperate; also, he had been too long accustomed to grabbing things to which his conscience told him he had doubtful right or none. "It's mine. I've been cheated out of it. I'll get it. Besides—" His mind suddenly cleared of the shadow of shame—"I owe it to mother and Del to make the fight. They've been cheated, too. Because they're too soft-hearted and too reverent of father's memory, is that any reason, any excuse, for my shirking my duty by them? If father were here to speak, I know he'd approve." Before him rose the frightful look in his father's eyes in the earlier stage of that second and last illness. "*That's* what the look meant!" he cried, now completely justified. "He recovered his reason. He wanted to undo the mischief that old sneak Hargrave had drawn him into!"

The case was complete: His father had been insane when he made the will, had repented afterward, but had been unable to unmake it; his only son Arthur Ranger, now head of the family, owed it to the family's future and to its two helpless and oversentimental women to right the wrong. A complete case, a clear case, a solemn mandate. Interest and duty were synonymous—as always to ingenious minds.

He lost no time in setting about this newly discovered high task of love and justice. Within twenty minutes he was closeted with Dawson of the great law firm, Mitchell, Dawson, Vance & Bischoffsheimer, who had had the best seats on

all the fattest stranded carcasses of the Middle West for a decade—that is, ever since Bischoffsheimer joined the firm and taught its intellects how on a vast scale to transubstantiate technically legal knowledge into technically legal wealth. Dawson—lean and keen, tough and brown of skin, and so carelessly dressed that he looked as if he slept in his clothes—listened with the sympathetic, unwandering attention which men give only him who comes telling where and how they can make money. The young man ended his story, all in a glow of enthusiasm for his exalted motives and of satisfaction with his eloquence in presenting them; then came the shrewd and thorough cross-examination which, he believed, strengthened every point he had made.

"On your showing," was Dawson's cautious verdict, "you seem to have a case. But you must not forget that judges and juries have a deep prejudice against breaking wills. They're usually fathers themselves, and guard the will as the parent's strongest weapon in keeping the children in order after they're too old for the strap or the bed slat, as the case may be. Undue influence or mental infirmity must be mighty clearly proven. Even then the court may decide to let the will stand, on general principles. Your mother and sister, of course, join you?"

"I—I hope so," hesitated Arthur. "I'm not sure." More self-possessedly: "You know how it is with women—with *ladies*—how they shrink from notoriety."

"No, I can't say I do," said Dawson dryly. "Ladies need money even more than women do, and so they'll usually go the limit, and beyond, to get it. However, assuming that for some reason or other, your mother and sister won't help, at least they won't oppose?"

"My sister is engaged to the son of Dr. Hargrave," said Arthur uneasily.

"That's good—excellent!" exclaimed Dawson, rubbing his gaunt, beard-discolored jaw vigorously.

"But—he—Theodore Hargrave is a sentimental, unpractical chap."

"So are we all—but not in money matters."

"He's an exception, I'm afraid," said Arthur. "Really—I think it's almost certain he'll try to influence her to take sides against me. And my mother was very bitter when I spoke of contest. But, as I've shown you, my case is quite apart from what they may or may not do."

"Um—um," grunted Dawson. He threw himself back in his chair; to aid him in thinking, he twisted the only remaining crown-lock of his gray-black hair, and slowly drew his thin lips from his big sallow teeth, and as slowly returned them to place. "Obviously," he said at length, "the doctor is the crucial witness. We must see to it that"—a significant grin—"that the other side does not attach him. We must anticipate them by attaching him to us. I'll see what can be done—legitimately, you understand. Perhaps you may have to engage additional counsel—some such firm as, say, Humperdink & Grafter. Often, in cases nowadays, there is detail work of an important character that lawyers of our standing couldn't think of undertaking. But, of course, we work in harmony with such other counsel as our client sees fit to engage."

"Certainly; I understand," said Arthur, with a knowing, "man-of-the-world" nod. His cause being good and its triumph necessary, he must not be squeamish about any alliances it might be necessary to make as a means to that triumph, where the world was so wicked. "Then, you undertake the case."

"We will look into it," Dawson corrected. "You appreciate that the litigation will be somewhat expensive?"

Arthur reddened. No, he hadn't thought of that! Whenever he had wanted anything, he had ordered it, and had let the bill go to his father; whenever he had wanted money, he had sent to his father for it, and had got it. Dawson's question made the reality of his position—moneyless, resourceless, friendless—burst over him like a waterspout. Dawson saw and understood; but it was not his cue to lessen that sense of helplessness.

At last Arthur sufficiently shook off his stupor to say: "Unless I win the contest, I shan't have any resources beyond the five thousand I get under the will, and a thousand or so I

have in bank at Saint X—and what little I could realize from my personal odds and ends. Isn't there some way the thing could be arranged?"

"There is the method of getting a lawyer to take a case on contingent fee," said Dawson. "That is, the lawyer gets a certain per cent of what he wins, and nothing if he loses. But *we* don't make such arrangements. They are regarded as almost unprofessional; I couldn't honestly recommend any lawyer who would. But, let me see—um—um—" Dawson was reflecting again, with an ostentation which might have roused the suspicions of a less guileless person than Arthur Ranger at twenty-five. "You could, perhaps, give us a retainer of say, a thousand in cash?"

"Yes," said Arthur, relieved. He thought he saw light ahead.

"Then we could take your note for say, five thousand—due in eighteen months. You could renew it, if your victory was by any chance delayed beyond that time."

"Your victory" was not very adroit, but it was adroit enough to bedazzle Arthur. "Certainly," said he gratefully.

Dawson shut his long, wild-looking teeth and gently drew back his dry, beard-discolored lips, while his keen eyes glinted behind his spectacles. The fly had a leg in the web!

Business being thus got into a smooth way, Dawson and Arthur became great friends. Nothing that Dawson said was a specific statement of belief in the ultimate success of the suit; but his every look and tone implied confidence. Arthur went away with face radiant and spirit erect. He felt that he was a man of affairs, a man of consequence. He had lawyers, and a big suit pending; and soon he would be rich. He thought of Janet, and audibly sneered. "I'll make the Whitneys sick of their treachery!" said he. Back had come his sense of strength and superiority; and once more he was "gracious" with servants and with such others of the "peasantry" as happened into or near his homeward path.

Toward three o'clock that afternoon, as he was being whirled toward Saint X in the Eastern Express, his lawyer

was in the offices of Ramsay & Vanorden, a rival firm of wreckers and pirate outfitters on the third floor of the same building. When Dawson had despatched his immediate business with Vanorden, he lingered to say: "Well, I reckon we'll soon be lined up on opposite sides in another big suit."

Confidences between the two firms were frequent and natural—not only because Vanorden and Dawson were intimate friends and of the greatest assistance each to the other socially and politically; not only because Ramsay and Bischoffsheimer had married sisters; but also, and chiefly, because big lawyers like to have big lawyers opposed to them in a big suit. For several reasons; for instance, ingenuity on each side prolongs the litigation and makes it intricate, and therefore highly expensive, and so multiplies the extent of the banquet.

"How so?" inquired Vanorden, put on the alert by the significant intonation of his friend.

"The whole Ranger-Whitney business is coming into court. Ranger, you know, passed over the other day. He cut his family off with almost nothing—gave his money to Tecumseh College. The son's engaged us to attack the will."

"Where do *we* come in?" asked Vanorden.

Dawson laughed and winked. "I guess your client, old Charley Whitney, won't miss the chance to intervene in the suit and annex the whole business, in the scrimmage."

Vanorden nodded. "Oh, I see," said he. "I see! Yes, we'll take a hand—sure!"

"There won't be much in it for us," continued Dawson. "The boy's got nothing, and between you and me, Len, the chances are against him. But you fellows and whoever gets the job of defending the college's rights—" Dawson opened his arms and made a humorous, huge, in-sweeping gesture. "And," he added, "Whitney's one of the trustees under the will. See?"

"Thanks, old man." Vanorden was laughing like a shrewd and mischievous but through-and-through good-natured boy. The two brilliant young leaders of the Illinois bar shook hands warmly.

And so it came about that Charles Whitney was soon indorsing a plan to cause, and to profit by, sly confusion—the plan of his able lawyers. They had for years steered his hardy craft, now under the flag of peaceful commerce and now under the black banner of the buccaneer. The best of pilots, they had enabled him to clear many a shoal of bankruptcy, many a reef of indictment. They served well, for he paid well.

CHAPTER XIII

BUT IS RESCUED

BY the time he reached Saint X our young "man of affairs" believed his conscience soundly converted to his adventure; and, as he drove toward the house, a final survey of his defenses and justifications satisfied him that they were impregnable. Nevertheless, as he descended from the station hack and entered the grounds of the place that in his heart of heart was all that the word "home" can contain, he felt strangely like a traitor and a sneak. He kept his manner of composed seriousness, but he reasoned in vain against those qualms of shame and panic. At the open front door he dared not lift his eyes lest he should be overwhelmed by the sight of that colossal figure, with a look in its face that would force him to see the truth about his thoughts and his acts. The house seemed deserted; on the veranda that opened out from the back parlor he found Dory Hargrave, reading. He no longer felt bitter toward Dory. Thinking over the whole of the Ranger-Whitney relations and the sudden double break in them, he had begun to believe that perhaps Adelaide had had the good luck to make an extremely clever stroke when she shifted from Ross Whitney to Hargrave. Anyhow, Dory was a fine fellow, both in looks and in brains, with surprisingly good, yes, really amazing air and manner—considering his opportunities; he'd be an ornament to any family as soon as he had money enough properly to equip himself—which would be very soon, now that the great Dawson was about to open fire on the will and demolish it.

"Howdy," he accordingly said, with only a shade less than his old friendliness, and that due to embarrassment, and not at all to ill feeling. "Where's mother—and Del?"

"Your sister has taken your mother for a drive," replied Hargrave.

"Smoke?" said Arthur, extending his gold cigarette case, open.

Dory preferred his own brand of cigarettes; but, feeling that he ought to meet any advance of Arthur's, he took one of the big, powerful Egyptians with "A. R." on it in blue monogram. They smoked in silence a moment or so, Arthur considering whether to practise on Dory the story of his proposed contest, to enable him to tell it in better form to his mother and sister. "I've been to Chicago to see about contesting the will," he began, deciding for the rehearsal.

"I supposed so," said Hargrave.

"Of course, for mother's and Del's sake I simply have to do it," he went on, much encouraged. "Anyone who knew father knows he must have been out of his mind when he made that will."

"I see your point of view," said Dory, embarrassed. Then, with an effort he met Arthur's eyes, but met them fearlessly. "You misunderstood me. I think a contest is a mistake."

Arthur flamed. "Naturally you defend your father," he sneered.

"Let us leave my father out of this," said Dory. His manner made it impossible for Arthur to persist. For, Dory was one of those who have the look of "peace with honor" that keeps to bounds even the man crazed by anger.

"You can't deny I have a legal right to make the contest," pursued Arthur.

"Undoubtedly."

"And a moral right, too," said Arthur, somewhat defiantly.

"Yes," assented Dory. The tone of the "yes"—or was it Arthur's own self-respect—made him suspect Dory of thinking that a man might have the clearest legal and moral right and still not be able to get his honor's consent. "But why dis-

cuss the matter, Arthur? You couldn't be changed by anything I'd say."

"We will discuss it!" exclaimed Arthur furiously. "I see what your plan is. You know I'm bound to win; so you'll try to influence Del and mother against me, and get the credit for taking high ground, and at the same time get the benefit of the breaking of the will. When the will's broken, mother'll have her third; you think you can stir up a quarrel between her and me, and she'll leave all of her third to Del and you."

Arthur had started up threateningly. There showed at his eyes and mouth the ugliest of those alien passions which his associations had thrust into him, and which had been master ever since the reading of the will. The signs were all for storm; but Dory sat impassive. He looked steadily at Arthur until Arthur could no longer withstand, but had to drop his eyes. Then he said: "I want you to think over what you have just said to me, Artie—especially your calculations on the death of your mother."

Arthur dropped back into his chair.

"Honestly, Artie, honestly," Dory went on, with the friendliest earnestness, "isn't there something wrong about anything that causes the man you are by nature to think and feel and talk that way, when his father is not a week dead?"

Arthur forced a sneer, but without looking at Dory.

"Do you remember the day of the funeral?" Dory went on. "It had been announced in the papers that the burial would be private. As we drove out of the front gates there, I looked round—you remember it was raining. There were uncovered farm wagons blocking the streets up and down. There were thousands of people standing in the rain with bared heads. And I saw tears thick as the rain drops streaming down faces of those who had known your father as boy and man, who had learned to know he was all that a human being should be."

Arthur turned away to hide his features from Dory.

"*That* was your father, Artie. What if *he* could have heard you a few minutes ago?"

"I don't need to have anyone praise my father to me," said Arthur, trying to mask his feelings behind anger. "And what you say is no reason why I should let mother and Del and myself be cheated out of what he wanted us to have."

Dory left it to Arthur's better self to discuss that point with him. "I know you'll do what is right," said he sincerely. "You are more like your father than you suspect as yet, Artie. I should have said nothing to you if you hadn't forced your confidence on me. What I've said is only what you'd say to me, were I in your place and you in mine—what you'll think yourself a month from now. What lawyer advised you to undertake the contest?"

"Dawson of Mitchell, Dawson, Vance & Bischoffsheimer. As good lawyers as there are in the country."

"I ought to tell you," said Dory, after brief hesitation, "that Judge Torrey calls them a quartette of unscrupulous scoundrels—says they're regarded as successful only because success has sunk to mean supremacy in cheating and double-dealing. Would you mind telling me what terms they gave you—about fee and expenses?"

"A thousand down, and a note for five thousand," replied Arthur, compelled to speech by the misgivings Dory was raising within him in spite of himself.

"That is, as the first installment, they take about all the money in sight. Does that look as if they believed in the contest?"

At this Arthur remembered and understood Dawson's remark, apparently casual, but really crucial, about the necessity of attaching Dr. Schulze. Without Schulze, he had no case; and Dawson had told him so! What kind of a self-hypnotized fool was he, not to hear the plainest warnings? And without waiting to see Schulze, he had handed over his money!

"I know you think I am not unprejudiced about this will," Dory went on. "But I ask you to have a talk with Judge Torrey. While he made the will, it was at your father's command, and he didn't and doesn't approve it. He knows all the circumstances. Before you go any further, wouldn't it be well

to see him? You know there isn't an abler lawyer, and you also know he's honest. If there's any way of breaking the will, he'll tell you about it."

Hiram Ranger's son now had the look of his real self emerging from the subsiding fumes of his debauch of folly and fury. "Thank you, Hargrave," he said. "You are right."

"Go straight off," advised Dory. "Go before you've said anything to your mother about what you intend to do. And please let me say one thing more. Suppose you do finally decide to make this contest. It means a year, two years, three years, perhaps five or six, perhaps ten or more, of suspense, of degrading litigation, with the best of you shriveling, with your abilities to do for yourself paralyzed. If you finally lose—you'll owe those Chicago sharks an enormous sum of money, and you'll be embittered and blighted for life. If you win, they and their pals will have most of the estate; you will have little but the barren victory; and you will have lost your mother. For, Arthur, if you try to prove that your father was insane, and cut off his family in insane anger, you know it will kill her."

A long silence; then Arthur moved toward the steps leading down to the drive. "I'll think it over," he said, in a tone very different from any he had used before.

Dory watched him depart with an expression of friendship and admiration. "He's going to Judge Torrey," he said to himself. "Scratch that veneer of his, and you find his mother and father."

The old judge received Arthur like a son, listened sympathetically as the young man gave him in detail the interview with Dawson. Even as Arthur recalled and related, he himself saw Dawson's duplicity; for, that past master of craft had blundered into the commonest error of craft of all degrees—he had underestimated the intelligence of the man he was trying to cozen. He, rough in dress and manners and regarding "dudishness" as unfailing proof of weak-mindedness, had set down the fashionable Arthur, with his Harvard accent and his ignorance of affairs, as an unmitigated ass. He had overlooked

the excellent natural mind which false education and foolish associations had tricked out in the motley, bells and bauble of "culture"; and so, he had taken no pains to cozen artistically. Also, as he thought greediness the strongest and hardiest passion in all human beings, because it was so in himself, he had not the slightest fear that anyone or anything could deflect his client from pursuing the fortune which dangled, or seemed to dangle, tantalizingly near.

Arthur, recalling the whole interview, was accurate where he had been visionary, intelligent where he had been dazed. He saw it all, before he was half done; he did not need Torrey's ejaculated summary: "The swindling scoundrel!" to confirm him.

"You signed the note?" said the judge.

"Yes," replied Arthur. He laughed with the frankness of self-derision that augurs so well for a man's teachableness.

"He must have guessed," continued the judge, "that a contest is useless."

At that last word Arthur changed expression, changed color —or, rather, lost all color. "Useless?" he repeated, so overwhelmed that he clean forgot pride of appearances and let his feelings have full play in his face. Useless! A contest useless. Then——

"I did have some hopes," interrupted Judge Torrey's deliberate, judicial tones, "but I had to give them up after I talked with Schulze and President Hargrave. Your father may have been somewhat precipitate, Arthur, but he was sane when he made that will. He believed his wealth would be a curse to his children. And— I ain't at all sure he wasn't right. As I look round this town, this whole country, and see how the second generation of the rich is rotten with the money-cancer, I feel that your grand, wise father had one of the visions that come only to those who are about to leave the world and have their eyes cleared of the dust of the combat, and their minds cooled of its passions." Here the old man leaned forward and laid his hand on the knee of the white, haggard youth. "Arthur," he went on, "your father's mind may have been

befogged by his affections in the years when he was letting his children do as they pleased, do like most children of the rich. And his mind may have been befogged by his affections again, *after* he made that will and went down into the Dark Valley. But, I tell you, boy, he was sane *when* he made that will. He was saner than most men have the strength of mind to be on the best day of their whole lives."

Arthur was sitting with elbows on the desk; his face stared out, somber and gaunt, from between his hands. "How much he favors his father," thought the old judge. "What a pity it don't go any deeper than looks." But the effect of the resemblance was sufficient to make it impossible for him to offer any empty phrases of cheer and consolation. After a long time the hopeless, dazed expression slowly faded from the young man's face; in its place came a calm, inscrutable look. The irresponsible boy was dead; the man had been born—in rancorous bitterness, but in strength and decision.

It was the man who said, as he rose to depart, "I'll write Dawson that I've decided to abandon the contest."

"Ask him to return the note," advised Torrey. "But," he added, "I doubt if he will."

"He won't," said Arthur. "And I'll not ask him. Anyhow, a few dollars would be of no use to me. I'd only prolong the agony of getting down to where I've got to go."

"Five thousand dollars is right smart of money," protested the judge. "On second thought, I guess you'd better let me negotiate with him." The old man's eyes were sparkling with satisfaction in the phrases that were forming in his mind for the first letter to Dawson.

"Thank you," said Arthur. But it was evident that he was not interested. "I must put the past behind me," he went on presently. "I mustn't think of it."

"After all," suggested Torrey, "you're not as bad off as more than ninety-nine per cent of the young men. You're just where they are—on bed rock. And you've got the advantage of your education."

Arthur smiled satirically. "The tools I learned to use at

college," said he, "aren't the tools for the Crusoe Island I've been cast away on."

"Well, I reckon a college don't ruin a young chap with the right stuff in him, even if it don't do him any great sight of good." He looked uneasily at Arthur, then began: "If you'd like to study law"—as if he feared the offer would be accepted, should he make it outright.

"No; thank you, I've another plan," replied Arthur, though "plan" would have seemed to Judge Torrey a pretentious name for the hazy possibilities that were beginning to gather in the remote corners of his mind.

"I supposed you wouldn't care for the law," said Torrey, relieved that his faint hint of a possible offer had not got him into trouble. He liked Arthur, but estimated him by his accent and his dress, and so thought him probably handicapped out of the running by those years of training for a career of polite uselessness. "That East!" he said to himself, looking pityingly at the big, stalwart youth in the elaborate fopperies of fashionable mourning. "That *damned* East! We send it most of our money and our best young men; and what do we get from it in return? Why, sneers and snob-ideas." However, he tried to change his expression to one less discouraging; but his face could not wholly conceal his forebodings. "It's lucky for the boy," he reflected, "that Hiram left him a good home as long as his mother's alive. After she's gone—and the five thousand, if I get it back—I suppose he'll drop down and down, and end by clerking it somewhere." With a survey of Arthur's fashionable attire, "I should say he might do fairly well in a gent's furnishing store in one of those damn cities." The old man was not unfeeling—far from it; he had simply been educated by long years of experience out of any disposition to exaggerate the unimportant in the facts of life. "He'll be better off and more useful as a clerk than he would be as a pattern of damnfoolishness and snobbishness. So, Hiram was right anyway I look at it, and no matter how it comes out. But—it did take courage to make that will!"

"Well, good day, judge," Arthur was saying, to end both

their reveries. "I must," he laughed curtly, "'get a move on.'"

"Good day, and God bless you, boy," said the old man, with a hearty earnestness that, for the moment, made Arthur's eyes less hard. "Take your time, settling on what to do. Don't be in a hurry."

"On the contrary," said Arthur. "I'm going to make up my mind at once. Nothing stales so quickly as a good resolution."

CHAPTER XIV

SIMEON

A CRISIS does not create character, but is simply its test. The young man who entered the gates of No. 64 Jefferson Street at five that afternoon was in all respects he who left them at a quarter before four, though he seemed very different to himself. He went direct to his own room and did not descend until the supper bell sounded—that funny little old jangling bell he and Del had striven to have abolished in the interests of fashionable progress, until they learned that in many of the best English houses it is a custom as sacredly part of the ghostly British Constitution as the bathless bath of the basin, as the jokeless joke of the pun, as the entertainment that entertains not, as the ruler that rules not and the freedom that frees not. When he appeared in the dining-room door, his mother and Del were already seated. His mother, her white face a shade whiter, said: "I expect you'd better sit—there." She neither pointed nor looked, but they understood that she meant Hiram's place. It was her formal announcement of her forgiveness and of her recognition of the new head of the family. With that in his face that gave Adelaide a sense of the ending of a tension within her, he seated himself where his father had always sat.

It was a silent supper, each one absorbed in thoughts which could not have been uttered, no one able to find any subject that would not make overwhelming the awful sense of the one that was not there and never again would be. Mrs. Ranger spoke once. "How did you find Janet?" she said to Arthur.

His face grew red, with gray underneath. After a pause

he answered: "Very well." Another pause, then: "Our engagement is broken off."

Mrs. Ranger winced and shrank. She knew how her question and the effort of that answer must have hurt the boy; but she did not make matters worse with words. Indeed, she would have been unable to say anything, for sympathy would have been hypocritical, and hypocrisy was with her impossible. She thought Arthur loved Janet; she realized, too, the savage wound to his pride in losing her just at this time. But she had never liked her, and now felt justified in that secret and, so she had often reproached herself, unreasonable dislike; and she proceeded to hate her, the first time she had ever hated anybody—to hate her as a mother can hate one who has made her child suffer.

After supper, Mrs. Ranger plunged into the household duties that were saving her from insanity. Adelaide and Arthur went to the side veranda. When Arthur had lighted a cigarette, he looked at it with a grim smile—it was astonishing how much stronger and manlier his face was, all in a few hours. "I'm on my last thousand of these," said he. "After them, no more cigarettes."

"Oh, it isn't so bad as all that!" said Adelaide. "We're still comfortable, and long before you could feel any change, you'll be making plenty of money."

"I'm going to work—next Monday—at the mills."

Adelaide caught her breath, beamed on him. "I knew you would!" she exclaimed. "I knew you were brave."

"Brave!" He laughed disagreeably. "Like the fellow that faces the fight because a bayonet's pricking his back. I can't go away somewhere and get a job, for there's nothing I can do. I've got to stay right here. I've got to stare this town out of countenance. I've got to get it used to the idea of me as a common workingman with overalls and a dinner pail."

She saw beneath his attempt to make light of the situation a deep and cruel humiliation. He was looking forward to the keenest torture to which a man trained in vanity to false

ideals can be subjected; and the thing itself, so Adelaide was thinking, would be more cruel than his writhing anticipation of it.

"Still," she insisted to him, "you are brave. You might have borrowed of mother and gone off to make one failure after another in gentlemanly attempts. You might have"—she was going to say, "tried to make a rich marriage," but stopped herself in time. "Oh, I forgot," she said, instead, "there's the five thousand dollars. Why not spend it in studying law—or something?"

"I've lost my five thousand," he replied. "I paid it for a lesson that was cheap at the price." Then, thoughtfully, "I've dropped out of the class 'gentleman' for good and all."

"Or into it," suggested she.

He disregarded this; he knew it was an insincerity—one of the many he and Del were now trying to make themselves believe against the almost hopeless handicap of the unbelief they had acquired as part of their "Eastern culture." He went on: "There's one redeeming feature of the—the situation."

"Only one?"

"And that for you," he said. "At least, *you*'ve got a small income."

"But I haven't," she replied. "Dory made me turn it over to mother."

Arthur stared. "Dory!"

"Yes," she answered, with a nod and a smile. It would have given Dory a surprise, a vastly different notion as to what she thought of him, had he seen her unawares just then.

"*Made* you?"

"Made," she repeated.

"And you did it?"

"I've promised I will."

"Why?"

"I don't just know," was her slow reply.

"Because he was afraid it might make bad blood between you and me?"

"That was one of the reasons he urged," she admitted. "But he thought, too, it would be bad for him and me."

A long silence. Then Arthur: "Del, I almost think you're not making such a mistake as I feared, in marrying him."

"So do I—sometimes," was his sister's, to him, astonishing answer, in an absent, speculative tone.

Arthur withheld the question that was on his lips. He looked curiously at the small graceful head, barely visible in the deepening twilight. "She's a strange one," he reflected. "I don't understand her— and I doubt if she understands herself."

And that last was very near to the truth. Everyone has a reason for everything he does; but it by no means follows that he always knows that reason, or even could extricate it from the tangle of motives, real and reputed, behind any given act. This self-ignorance is less common among men than among women, with their deliberate training to self-consciousness and to duplicity; it is most common among those—men as well as women—who think about themselves chiefly. And Adelaide, having little to think about when all her thinking was hired out, had of necessity thought chiefly about herself.

"You guessed that Janet has thrown me over?" Arthur said, to open the way for relieving his mind.

Adelaide made a gallant effort, and her desire to console him conquered her vanity. "Just as Ross threw me over," she replied, with a successful imitation of indifference.

Instead of being astonished at the news, Arthur was astonished at his not having guessed it. His first sensation was the very human one of pleasure—the feeling that he had companionship in humiliation. He moved closer to her. Then came an instinct, perhaps true, perhaps false, that she was suffering, that Ross had wounded her cruelly, that she was not so calm as her slim, erect figure seemed in the deep dusk. He burst out in quiet, intense fury: "Del, I'll make those two wish to God they hadn't!"

"You can't do it, Artie," she replied. "The only power on earth that can do them up is themselves." She paused to

vent the laugh that was as natural in the circumstances as it was unpleasant to hear. "And I think they'll do it," she went on, "without any effort on your part—or mine."

"You do not hate them as I do," said he.

"I'm afraid I'm not a good hater," she answered. "I admit I've got a sore spot where he—struck me. But as far as he's concerned, I honestly believe I'm already feeling a little bit obliged to him."

"Naturally," said he in a tone that solicited confidences. "Haven't you got what you really wanted?"

But his sister made no reply.

"Look here, Del," he said after waiting in vain, "if you don't want to marry, there's no reason why you should. You'll soon see I'm not as good-for-nothing as some people imagine."

"What makes you think I don't want to marry?" asked Adelaide, her face completely hid by the darkness, her voice betraying nothing.

"Why, what you've been saying—or, rather, what you've *not* been saying."

A very long silence, then out of the darkness came Adelaide's voice, even, but puzzling. "Well, Artie, I've made up my mind to marry. I've got to *do* something, and Dory'll give me something to do. If I sat about waiting, waiting, and thinking, thinking, I should do—something desperate. I've got to get away from myself. I've got to forget myself. I've got to get a new self."

"Just as I have," said Arthur.

Presently he sat on the arm of her chair and reached out for her hand which was seeking his.

When Hiram was first stricken, Adelaide's Simeon had installed himself as attendant-in-chief. The others took turns at nursing; Simeon was on duty every hour of every twenty-four. He lost all interest in Adelaide, in everything except the sick man. Most of the time he sat quietly, gazing at the huge, helpless object of his admiration as if fascinated. Whenever Hiram deigned to look at him, he chattered softly, timidly ap-

proached, retreated, went through all his tricks, watching the while for some sign of approval. The first week or so, Hiram simply tolerated the pathetic remembrancer to human humility because he did not wish to chagrin his daughter. But it is not in nature to resist a suit so meek, so persistent, and so unasking as Simeon's. Soon Hiram liked to have his adorer on his knee, on the arm of his chair, on the table beside him; occasionally he moved his unsteady hand slowly to Simeon's head to give it a pat. And in the long night hours of wakefulness there came to be a soothing companionship in the sound of Simeon's gentle breathing in the little bed at the head of his bed; for Simeon would sleep nowhere else.

The shy races of mankind, those that hide their affections and rarely give them expression, are fondest of domestic animals, because to them they can show themselves without fear of being laughed at or repulsed. But it happened that Hiram had never formed a friendship with a dog. In his sickness and loneliness, he was soon accepting and returning Simeon's fondness in kind. And at the time when a man must re-value everything in life and put a proper estimate upon it, this unselfish, incessant, wholly disinterested love of poor Simeon's gave him keen pleasure and content. After the stroke that entombed him, some subtle instinct seemed to guide Simeon when to sit and sympathize at a distance, when to approach and give a gentle caress, with tears running from his eyes. But the death Simeon did not understand at all. Those who came to make the last arrangements excited him to fury. Adelaide had to lock him in her dressing room until the funeral was over. When she released him, he flew to the room where he had been accustomed to sit with his great and good friend. No Hiram! He ran from room to room, chattering wildly, made the tour of gardens and outbuildings, returned to the room in which his quest had started. He seemed dumb with despair. He had always looked ludicrously old and shriveled; his appearance now became tragic. He would start up from hours of trancelike motionlessness, would make a tour of house and grounds; scrambling and shambling from place to place;

chattering at doors he could not open, then pausing to listen; racing to the front fence and leaping to its top to crane up and down the street; always back in the old room in a few minutes, to resume his watch and wait. He would let no one but Adelaide touch him, and he merely endured her; good and loving though she seemed to be, he felt that she was somehow responsible for the mysterious vanishing of his god while she had him shut away.

Sometimes in the dead of night, Adelaide or Arthur or Mrs. Ranger, waking, would hear him hurrying softly, like a ghost, along the halls or up and down the stairs. They, with the crowding interests that compel the mind, no matter how fiercely the bereaved heart may fight against intrusion, would forget for an hour now and then the cause of the black shadow over them and all the house and all the world; and as the weeks passed their grief softened and their memories of the dead man began to give them that consoling illusion of his real presence. But not Simeon; he could think only that his friend had been there and was gone.

At last the truth in some form must have come to him. For he gave up the search and the hope, and lay down to die. Food he would not touch; he neither moved nor made a sound. When Adelaide took him up, he lifted dim tragic eyes to her for an instant, then sank back as if asleep. One morning, they found him in Hiram's great arm chair, huddled in its depths, his head upon his knees, his hairy hands stiff against his cheeks. They buried him in the clump of lilac bushes of which Hiram had been especially fond.

Stronger than any other one influence for good upon Adelaide and Arthur at that critical time, was this object lesson Simeon gave—Simeon with his single-hearted sorrow and single-minded love.

CHAPTER XV

EARLY ADVENTURES OF A 'PRENTICE

ARTHUR, about to issue forth at a quarter to seven on Monday morning to begin work as a cooper's apprentice, felt as if he would find all Saint X lined up to watch him make the journey in working clothes. He had a bold front as he descended the lawn toward the gates; but at the risk of opening him to those with no sympathy for weaknesses other than their own, and for their own only in themselves, it must be set down that he seemed to himself to be shaking and skulking. He set his teeth together, gave himself a final savage cut with the lash of "What a damned coward I am!" and closed the gate behind him and was in the street—a workingman. He did not realize it, but he had shown his mettle; for, no man with any real cowardice anywhere in him would have passed through that gate and faced a world that loves to sneer.

From the other big houses of that prosperous neighborhood were coming, also in working clothes, the fathers, and occasionally the sons, of families he was accustomed to regard as "all right—for Saint X." At the corner of Cherry Lane, old Bolingbroke, many times a millionaire thanks to a thriving woolen factory, came up behind him and cried out, "*Well*, young man! *This* is something like." In his enthusiasm he put his arm through Arthur's. "As soon as I read your father's will, I made one myself," he continued as they hurried along at Bolingbroke's always furious speed. "I always did have my boys at work; I send 'em down half an hour before me every morning. But it occurred to me they might bury

their enthusiasm in the cemetery along with me." He gave his crackling, snapping laugh that was strange and even startling in itself, but seemed the natural expression of his snapping eyes and tight-curling, wiry whiskers and hair. "So I fixed up my will. No pack of worthless heirs to make a mockery of my life and teachings after I'm gone. No, sir-ee!"

Arthur was more at ease. "Appearances" were no longer against him—distinctly the reverse. He wondered that his vanity could have made him overlook the fact that what he was about to do was as much the regular order in prosperous Saint X, throughout the West for that matter, as posing as a European gentleman was the regular order of the "upper classes" of New York and Boston—and that even there the European gentleman was a recent and rather rare importation. And Bolingbroke's hearty admiration, undeserved though Arthur felt it to be, put what he thought was nerve into him and stimulated what he then regarded as pride. "After all, I'm not really a common workman," reflected he. "It's like mother helping Mary." And he felt still better when, passing the little millinery shop of "Wilmot & Company" arm in arm with the great woolen manufacturer, he saw Estelle Wilmot—sweeping out. Estelle would have looked like a story-book princess about royal business, had she been down on her knees scrubbing a sidewalk. He was glad she didn't happen to see him, but he was gladder that he had seen her. Clearly, toil was beginning to take on the appearance of "good form."

He thought pretty well of himself all that day. Howells treated him like the proprietor's son; Pat Waugh, foreman of the cooperage, put "Mr. Arthur" or "Mr. Ranger" into every sentence; the workingmen addressed him as "sir," and seemed to appreciate his talking as affably with them as if he were unaware of the precipice of caste which stretched from him down to them. He was in a pleasant frame of mind as he went home and bathed and dressed for dinner. And, while he knew he had really been in the way at the cooperage and had earned nothing, yet—his ease about his social status permitting—he felt a sense of self-respect which was of an en-

tirely new kind, and had the taste of the fresh air of a keen, clear winter day.

This, however, could not last. The estate was settled up; the fiction that he was of the proprietorship slowly yielded to the reality; the men, not only those over him but also those on whose level he was supposed to be, began to judge him as a man. "The boys say," growled Waugh to Howells, "that he acts like one of them damn spying dude sons proprietors sometimes puts in among the men to learn how to work 'em harder for less. He don't seem to catch on that he's got to get his money out of his own hands."

"Touch him up a bit," said Howells, who had worshiped Hiram Ranger and in a measure understood what had been in his mind when he dedicated his son to a life of labor. "If it becomes absolutely necessary I'll talk to him. But maybe you can do the trick."

Waugh, who had the useful man's disdain of deliberately useless men and the rough man's way of feeling it and showing it, was not slow to act on Howells's license. That very day he found Arthur unconsciously and even patronizingly shirking the tending of a planer so that his teacher, Bud Rollins, had to do double work. Waugh watched this until it had "riled" him sufficiently to loosen his temper and his language. "Hi, there, Ranger!" he shouted. "What the hell! You've been here goin' on six months now, and you're more in the way than you was the first day."

Arthur flushed, flashed, clenched his fists; but the planer was between him and Waugh, and that gave Waugh's tremendous shoulders and fists a chance to produce a subduing visual impression. A man, even a young man, who is nervous on the subject of his dignity, will, no matter how brave and physically competent, shrink from avoidable encounter that means doubtful battle. And dignity was a grave matter with young Ranger in those days.

"Don't hoist your dander up at me," said Waugh. "Get it up agin' yourself. Bud, next time he soldiers on you, send him to me."

"All right, sir," replied Bud, with a soothing grin. And when Waugh was gone, he said to Arthur, "Don't mind him. Just keep pegging along, and you'll learn all right."

Bud's was the tone a teacher uses to encourage a defective child. It stung Arthur more fiercely than had Waugh's. It flashed on him that the men—well, they certainly hadn't been looking up to him as he had been fondly imagining. He went at his work resolutely, but blunderingly; he spoiled a plank and all but clogged the machine. His temper got clean away from him, and he shook with a rage hard to restrain from venting itself against the inanimate objects whose possessing devils he could hear jeering at him through the roar of the machinery.

"Steady! Steady!" warned good-natured Rollins. "You'll drop a hand under that knife."

The words had just reached Arthur when he gave a sharp cry. With a cut as clean as the edge that made it, off came the little finger of his left hand, and he was staring at it as it lay upon the bed of the planer, twitching, seeming to breathe as its blood pulsed out, while the blood spurted from his maimed hand. In an instant Lorry Tague had the machine still.

"A bucket of clean water," he yelled to the man at the next planer.

He grabbed dazed Arthur's hand, and pressed hard with his powerful thumb and forefinger upon the edges of the wound.

"A doctor!" he shouted at the men crowding round.

Arthur did not realize what had happened until he found himself forced to his knees, his hand submerged in the ice-cold water, Lorry still holding shut the severed veins and arteries.

"Another bucket of water, you, Bill," cried Lorry.

When it came he had Bill Johnstone throw the severed finger into it. Bud Rollins, who had jumped through the window into the street in a dash for a physician, saw Doctor Schulze's buggy just turning out of High Street. He gave

chase, had Schulze beside Arthur within two minutes. More water, both hot and cold, was brought, and a cleared work bench; with swift, sure fingers the doctor cleaned the stump, cleaned the severed finger, joined and sewed them, bandaged the hand.

"Now, I'll take you home," he said. "I guess you've distinguished yourself enough for the day."

Arthur followed him, silent and meek as a humbled dog. As they were driving along Schulze misread a mournful look which Arthur cast at his bandaged hand. "It's nothing—nothing at all," he said gruffly. "In a week or less you could be back at work." The accompanying sardonic grin said plain as print, "But this dainty dandy is done with work."

Weak and done though Arthur was, some blood came into his pale face and he bit his lip with anger.

Schulze saw these signs.

"Several men are *killed* every year in those works—and not through their carelessness, either," he went on in a milder, friendlier tone. "And forty or fifty are maimed—not like that little pin scratch of yours, my dear Mr. Ranger, but hands lost, legs lost—accidents that make cripples for life. That means tragedy—not the wolf at the door, but with his snout right in the platter."

"I've seen that," said Arthur. "But I never thought much about it—until now."

"Naturally," commented Schulze, with sarcasm. Then he added philosophically, "And it's just as well not to bother about it. Mankind found this world a hell, and is trying to make it over into a heaven. And a hell it still is, even more of a hell than at first, and it'll be still more of a hell—for these machines and these slave-driving capitalists with their luxury-crazy families are worse than wars and aristocrats. They make the men work, and the women and the children—make 'em all work as the Pharaohs never sweated the wretches they set at building the pyramids. The nearer the structure gets toward completion, the worse the driving and the madder the haste. Some day the world'll be worth living

in—probably just about the time it's going to drop into the sun. Meanwhile, it's a hell of a place. We're a race of slaves, toiling for the benefit of the race of gods that'll some day be born into a habitable world and live happily ever afterwards. Science will give them happiness—and immortality, if they lose the taste for the adventure into the Beyond."

Arthur's brain heard clearly enough to remember afterwards; but Schulze's voice seemed to be coming through a thick wall. When they reached the Ranger house, Schulze had to lift him from the buggy and support his weight and guide his staggering steps. Out ran Mrs. Ranger, with *the* terror in her eyes.

"Don't lose your head, ma'am," said Schulze. "It's only a cut finger. The young fool forgot he was steering a machine, and had a sharp but slight reminder."

Schulze was heavily down on the "interesting-invalid" habit. He held that the world's supply of sympathy was so small that there wasn't enough to provide encouragement for those working hard and well; that those who fell into the traps of illness set in folly by themselves should get, at most, toleration in the misfortunes in which others were compelled to share. "The world discourages strength and encourages weakness," he used to declaim. "That injustice and cruelty must be reversed!"

"Doctor Schulze is right," Arthur was saying to his mother, with an attempt at a smile. But he was glad of the softness and ease of the big divan in the back parlor, of the sense of hovering and protecting love he got from his mother's and Adelaide's anxious faces. Sorer than the really trifling wound was the deep cut into his vanity. How his fellow-workmen were pitying him!—a poor blockhead of a bungler who had thus brought to a pitiful climax his failure to learn a simple trade. And how the whole town would talk and laugh! "Hiram Ranger, he begat a fool!"

Schulze, with proper equipment, redressed and rebandaged the wound, and left, after cautioning the young man not to

move the sick arm. "You'll be all right to strum the guitar and sport a diamond ring in a fortnight at the outside," said he. At the door he lectured Adelaide: "For God's sake, Miss Ranger, don't let his mother coddle him. He's got the makings of a man like his father—not as big, perhaps, but still a lot of a man. Give him a chance! Give him a chance! If this had happened in a football game or a fox-hunt, nobody would have thought anything of it. But just because it was done at useful work, you've got yourself all fixed to make a fearful to-do."

How absurdly does practice limp along, far behind firm-striding theory! Schulze came twice that day, looked in twice the next day, and fussed like a disturbed setting-hen when his patient forestalled the next day's visit by appearing at his office for treatment. "I want to see if I can't heal that cut without a scar," was his explanation—but it was a mere excuse.

When Arthur called on the fifth day, Schulze's elder daughter, Madelene, opened the door. "Will you please tell the doctor," said he, "that the workman who cut his finger at the cooperage wishes to see him?"

Madelene's dark gray eyes twinkled. She was a tall and, so he thought, rather severe-looking young woman; her jet black hair was simply, yet not without a suspicion of coquetry, drawn back over her ears from a central part—or what would have been a part had her hair been less thick. She was studying medicine under her father. It was the first time he had seen her, it so happened, since she was in knee dresses at public school. As he looked he thought: "A splendid advertisement for the old man's business." Just why she seemed so much healthier than even the healthiest, he found it hard to understand. She was neither robust nor radiant. Perhaps it was the singular clearness of her dead-white skin and of the whites of her eyes; again it might have been the deep crimson of her lips and of the inside of her mouth—a wide mouth with two perfect rows of small, strong teeth of the kind that go with intense vitality.

"Just wait here," said she, in a businesslike tone, as she indicated the reception room.

"You don't remember me?" said Arthur, to detain her.

"No, I don't *remember* you," replied Madelene. "But I know who you are."

"Who I *was*," thought Arthur, his fall never far from the foreground of his mind. "You used to be very serious, and always perfect in your lessons," he continued aloud, "and—most superior."

Madelene laughed. "I was a silly little prig," said she. Then, not without a subtle hint of sarcasm, "But I suppose we all go through that period—some of us in childhood, others further along."

Arthur smiled, with embarrassment. So he had the reputation of being a prig.

Madelene was in the doorway. "Father will be free—presently," said she. "He has another patient with him. If you don't care to wait, perhaps I can look after the cut. Father said it was a trifle."

Arthur slipped his arm out of the sling.

"In here," said Madelene, opening the door of a small room to the left of her father's consultation room.

Arthur entered. "This is your office?" he asked, looking round curiously, admiringly. It certainly was an interesting room, as the habitat of an interesting personality is bound to be.

"Yes," she replied. "Sit here, please."

Arthur seated himself in the chair by the window and rested his arm on the table. He thought he had never seen fingers so long as hers, or so graceful. Evidently she had inherited from her father that sure, firm touch which is perhaps the highest talent of the surgeon. "It seems such an—an—such a *hard* profession for a woman," said he, to induce those fascinating lips of hers to move.

"It isn't soft," she replied. "But then father hasn't brought us up soft."

This was discouraging, but Arthur tried again. "You like it?"

"I love it," said she, and now her eyes were a delight. "It makes me hate to go to bed at night, and eager to get up in the morning. And that means really living, doesn't it?"

"A man like me must seem to you a petty sort of creature."

"Oh, I haven't any professional haughtiness," was her laughing reply. "One kind of work seems to me just as good as another. It's the spirit of the workman that makes the only differences."

"That's it," said Arthur, with a humility which he thought genuine and which was perhaps not wholly false. "I don't seem to be able to give my heart to my work."

"I fancy you'll give it *attention* hereafter," suggested Madelene. She had dressed the almost healed finger and was dexterously rebandaging it. She was necessarily very near to him, and from her skin there seemed to issue a perfumed energy that stimulated his nerves. Their eyes met. Both smiled and flushed.

"That wasn't very kind—that remark," said he.

"What's all this?" broke in the sharp voice of the doctor.

Arthur started guiltily, but Madelene, without lifting her eyes from her task, answered: "Mr. Ranger didn't want to be kept waiting."

"She's trying to steal my practice away from me!" cried Schulze. He looked utterly unlike his daughter at first glance, but on closer inspection there was an intimate resemblance, like that between the nut and its rough, needle-armored shell. "Well, I guess she hasn't botched it." This in a pleased voice, after an admiring inspection of the workmanlike bandage. "Come again to-morrow, young man."

Arthur bowed to Madelene and somehow got out into the street. He was astonished at himself and at the world. He had gone drearily into that office out of a dreary world; he had issued forth light of heart and delighted with the fresh, smiling, interesting look of the shaded streets and the green hedges and lawns and flower beds. "A fine old town," he said to himself. "Nice, friendly people—and the really right sort. As soon as I'm done with the rough stretch I've

got just ahead of me, I'm going to like it. Let me see—one of those girls was named Walpurga and one was named—Madelene—this one, I'm sure—Yes!" And he could hear the teacher calling the roll, could hear the alto voice from the serious face answer to "Madelene Schulze," could hear the light voice from the face that was always ready to burst into smiles answer to "Walpurga Schulze."

But though it was quite unnecessary he, with a quite unnecessary show of carelessness, asked Del which was which. "The black one is Madelene," replied she, and her ability to speak in such an indifferent tone of such an important person surprised him. "The blonde is Walpurga. I used to detest Madelene. She always treated me as if I hadn't any sense."

"Well, you can't blame her for that, Del," said Arthur. "You've been a great deal of a fool in your day—before you blossomed out. Do you remember the time Dory called you down for learning things to show off, and how furious you got?"

Adelaide looked suddenly warm, though she laughed too. "Why did you ask about Dr. Schulze's daughters?" she asked.

"I saw one of them this morning—a beauty, a tip-topper. And no nonsense about her. As she's 'black,' I suppose her name is Madelene."

"Oh, I remember now!" exclaimed Adelaide. "Madelene is going to be a doctor. They say she's got nerves of iron—can cut and slash like her father."

Arthur was furious, just why he didn't know. No doubt what Del said was true, but there were ways and ways of saying things. "I suppose there is some sneering at her," said he, "among the girls who couldn't do anything if they tried. It seems to me, if there is any profession a woman could follow without losing her womanliness, it is that of doctor. Every woman ought to be a doctor, whether she ever tries to make a living out of it or not."

Adelaide was not a little astonished by this outburst.

"You'll be coming round to Dory's views of women, if you aren't careful," said she.

"There's a lot of sense in what Dory says about a lot of things," replied Arthur.

Del sheered off. "How did the doctor say your hand is?"

"Oh—all right," said Arthur. "I'm going to work on Monday."

"Did he say you could?"

"No, but I'm tired of doing nothing. I've got to 'get busy' if I'm to pull out of this mess."

His look, his tone made his words sound revolutionary. And, in fact, his mood was revolutionary. He was puzzled at his own change of attitude. His sky had cleared of black clouds; the air was no longer heavy and oppressive. He wanted to work; he felt that by working he could accomplish something, could deserve and win the approval of people who were worth while—people like Madelene Schulze, for instance.

Next day he lurked round the corner below the doctor's house until he saw him drive away; then he went up and rang the bell. This time it was the "blonde" that answered—small and sweet, pink and white, with tawny hair. This was disconcerting. "I couldn't get here earlier," he explained. "I saw the doctor just driving away. But, as these bandages feel uncomfortable, I thought perhaps his daughter—your sister, is she not?—might—might fix them."

Walpurga looked doubtful. "I think she's busy," she said. "I don't like to disturb her."

Just then Madelene crossed the hall. Her masses of black hair were rolled into a huge knot on top of her head; she was wearing a white work slip and her arms were bare to the elbows—the finest arms he had ever seen, Arthur thought. She seemed in a hurry and her face was flushed—she would have looked no differently if she had heard his voice and had come forth to prevent his getting away without having seen him. "Meg!" called her sister. "Can you——"

Madelene apparently saw her sister and Arthur for the first

time. "Good morning, Mr. Ranger. You've come too late. Father's out."

Arthur repeated his doleful tale, convincingly now, for his hand did feel queer—as what hand would not, remembering such a touch as Madelene's, and longing to experience it again?

"Certainly," said Madelene. "I'll do the best I can. Come in."

And once more he was in her office, with her bending over him. And presently her hair came unrolled, came showering down on his arm, on his face; and he shook like a leaf and felt as if he were going to faint, into such an ecstasy did the soft rain of these tresses throw him. As for Madelene, she was almost hysterical in her confusion. She darted from the room.

When she returned she seemed calm, but that was because she did not lift those tell-tale gray eyes. Neither spoke as she finished her work. If Arthur had opened his lips it would have been to say words which he thought she would resent, and he repent. Not until his last chance had almost ebbed did he get himself sufficiently in hand to speak. "It wasn't true —what I said," he began. "I waited until your father was gone. Then I came—to see you. As you probably know, I'm only a workman, hardly even that, at the cooperage, but—I want to come to see you. May I?"

She hesitated.

"I know the people in this town have a very poor opinion of me," he went on, "and I deserve it, no doubt. You see, the bottom dropped out of my life not long ago, and I haven't found myself yet. But you did more for me in ten minutes the other day than everything and everybody, including myself, have been able to do since my father died."

"I don't remember that I said anything," she murmured.

"I didn't say that what you said helped me. I said what you *did*—and looked. And—I'd like to come."

"We never have any callers," she explained. "You see, father's—our—views— People don't understand us. And,

too, we've found ourselves very congenial and sufficient unto one another. So—I—I—don't know what to say."

He looked so cast down that she hastened on: "Yes—come whenever you like. We're always at home. But we work all day."

"So do I," said Arthur. "Thank you. I'll come—some evening next week."

Suddenly he felt peculiarly at ease with her, as if he had always known her, as if she and he understood each other perfectly. "I'm afraid you'll find me stupid," he went on. "I don't know much about any of the things you're interested in."

"Perhaps I'm interested in more things than you imagine," said she. "My sister says I'm a fraud—that I really have a frivolous mind and that my serious look is a hollow pretense."

And so they talked on, not getting better acquainted but enjoying the realization of how extremely well acquainted they were. When he was gone, Madelene found that her father had been in for some time. "Didn't he ask for me?" she said to Walpurga.

"Yes," answered Walpurga. "And I told him you were flirting with Arthur Ranger."

Madelene colored violently. "I never heard that word in this house before," she said stiffly.

"Nor I," replied Walpurga, the pink and white. "And I think it's high time—with you nearly twenty-two and me nearly twenty."

At dinner her father said: "Well, Lena, so you've got a beau at last. I'd given up hope."

"For Heaven's sake don't scare him away, father!" cried Walpurga.

"A pretty poor excuse," pursued the doctor. "I doubt if Arthur Ranger can make enough to pay his own board in a River Street lodging house."

"It took courage—real courage—to go to work as he did," replied Madelene, her color high.

"Yes," admitted her father, "*if* he sticks to it."

"He will stick to it," affirmed Madelene.

"I think so," assented her father, dropping his teasing pretense and coming out frankly for Arthur. "When a man shows that he has the courage to cross the Rubicon, there's no need to worry about whether he'll go on or turn back."

"You mustn't let him know he's the only beau you've ever had, Meg," cautioned her sister.

"And why not?" demanded Madelene. "If I ever did care especially for a man, I'd not care for him because other women had. And I shouldn't want a man to be so weak and vain as to feel that way about me."

It was a temptation to that aloof and isolated, yet anything but lonely or lonesome, household to discuss this new and strange phenomenon—the intrusion of an outsider, and he a young man. But the earnestness in Madelene's voice made her father and her sister feel that to tease her further would be impertinent.

Arthur had said he would not call until the next week because then he would be at work again. He went once more to Dr. Schulze's, but was careful to go in office hours. He did not see Madelene—though she, behind the white sash curtains of her own office, saw him come, watched him go until he was out of sight far down the street. On Monday he went to work, really to work. No more shame; no more shirking or shrinking; no more lingering on the irrevocable. He squarely faced the future, and, with his will like his father's, set dogged and unconquerable energy to battering at the obstacles before him. "All a man needs," said he to himself, at the end of the first day of real work, "is a purpose. He never knows where he's at until he gets one. And once he gets it, he can't rest till he has accomplished it."

What was his purpose? He didn't know—beyond a feeling that he must lift himself from his present position of being an object of pity to all Saint X and the sort of man that hasn't the right to ask any woman to be his wife.

CHAPTER XVI

A CAST-OFF SLIPPER

A LARGE sum would soon be available; so the carrying out of the plans to extend, or, rather, to construct Tecumseh, must be begun. The trustees commissioned young Hargrave to go abroad at once in search of educational and architectural ideas, and to get apparatus that would make the laboratories the best in America. Chemistry and its most closely related sciences were to be the foundation of the new university, as they are at the foundation of life. "We'll model our school, not upon what the ignorant wise of the Middle Ages thought ought to be life, but upon life itself," said Dr. Hargrave. "We'll build not from the clouds down, but from the ground up." He knew in the broad outline what was wanted for the Tecumseh of his dream; but he felt that he was too old, perhaps too rusted in old-fashioned ways and ideas, himself to realize the dream; so he put the whole practical task upon Dory, whom he had trained from infancy to just that end.

When it was settled that Dory was to go, would be away a year at the least, perhaps two years, he explained to Adelaide. "They expect me to leave within a fortnight," he ended. And she knew what was in his mind—what he was hoping she would say.

It so happened that, in the months since their engagement, an immense amount of work had been thrust upon Dory. Part of it was a study of the great American universities, and that meant long absences from home. All of it was of the kind that must be done at once or not at all—and Work is the one

mistress who, if she be enamored enough of a man to resolve to have him and no other, can compel him, whether he be enamored of her or not. However, for the beginning of the artificial relation between this engaged couple, the chief cause was not his work but his attitude toward her, his not unnatural but highly unwise regard for the peculiar circumstances in which they had become engaged. Respect for the real feelings of others is all very well, if not carried too far; but respect for the purely imaginary feelings of others simply encourages them to plunge deeper into the fogs and bogs of folly. There was excuse for Dory's withholding from his love affair the strong and firm hand he laid upon all his other affairs; but it cannot be denied that he deserved what he got, or, rather, that he failed to deserve what he did not get. And the irony of it was that his unselfishness was chiefly to blame; for a selfish man would have gone straight at Del and, with Dory's advantages, would have captured her forthwith.

As it was, she drifted aimlessly through day after day, keeping close at home, interested in nothing. She answered briefly or not at all the letters from her old friends, and she noted with a certain blunted bitterness how their importunities fainted and died away, as the news of the change in her fortunes got round. If she had been seeing them face to face every day, or if she had been persistent and tenacious, they would have extricated themselves less abruptly; for not the least important among the sacred "appearances" of conventionality is the "appearance" of good-heartedness; it is the graceful cloak for that icy selfishness which is as inevitable among the sheltered and pampered as sympathy and helpfulness are among those naked to the joys and sorrows of real life. Adelaide was far from her friends, and she deliberately gave them every opportunity to abandon and to forget her without qualms or fears of "appearing" mean and snobbish. There were two girls from whom she rather hoped for signs of real friendship. She had sought them in the first place because they were "of the right sort," but she had come to like them for themselves and she believed they liked her for

herself. And so they did; but their time was filled with the relentless routine of the fashionable life, and they had not a moment to spare for their own personal lives; besides, Adelaide wouldn't have "fitted in" comfortably. The men of their set would be shy of her now; the women would regard her as a waste of time.

Her beauty and her cleverness might have saved her, had she been of one of those "good families" whom fashionables the world over recognize, regardless of their wealth or poverty, because recognition of them gives an elegant plausibility to the pretense that Mammon is not the supreme god in the Olympus of aristocracy. But—who were the Rangers? They might be "all right" in Saint X, but where was Saint X? Certainly, not on any map in the geography of fashion.

So Adelaide, sore but too lethargic to suffer, drifted drearily along, feeling that if Dory Hargrave were not under the influence of that brilliant, vanished past of hers, even he would abandon her as had the rest, or, at least, wouldn't care for her. Not that she doubted his sincerity in the ideals he professed; but people deceived themselves so completely. There was her own case; had she for an instant suspected how flimsily based was her own idea of herself and of her place in the world?—the "world" meaning, of course, "the set." As is the rule in "sets," her self-esteem's sole foundation had been what she had, or, rather, what the family had, and now that that was gone, she held what was left cheap indeed—and held herself the cheaper that she could feel thus. At the outset, Arthur, after the familiar male fashion, was apparently the weaker of the two. But when the test came, when the time for courageous words was succeeded by the time for deeds, the shrinking from action that, since the nation grew rich, has become part of the education of the women of the classes which shelter and coddle their women, caused Adelaide to seem feeble indeed beside her brother. Also—and this should never be forgotten in judging such a woman—Arthur had the advantage of the man's compulsion to act, while Adelaide had the

disadvantage of being under no material necessity to act—and what necessity but the material is there?

Dory—his love misleading his passion, as it usually does when it has much influence before marriage—reasoned that, in the interest of the Adelaide that was to be, after they were married, and in his own interest with her as well, the wise course for him to pursue was to wait until time and the compulsion of new circumstances should drive away her mood, should give her mind and her real character a chance to assert themselves. In the commission to go abroad, he saw the external force for which he had been waiting and hoping. And it seemed to him most timely—for Ross's wedding invitations were out.

"Two weeks," said Adelaide absently. "You will sail in two weeks." Then in two weeks she could be out of it all, could be far away in new surroundings, among new ideas, among strangers. She could make the new start; she could submerge, drown her old self in the new interests.

"Will you come?" he said, when he could endure the suspense no longer. "Won't you come?"

She temporized. "I'm afraid I couldn't—oughtn't to leave—mother and Arthur just now."

He smiled sadly. She might need her mother and her brother; but in the mood in which she had been for the last few months, they certainly did not need her. "Adelaide," said he, with that firmness which he knew so well how to combine with gentleness, without weakening it, "our whole future depends on this. If our lives are to grow together, we must begin. This is *our* opportunity."

She knew that Dory was not a man she could play fast and loose with, even had she been so disposed. Clearly, she must decide whether she intended to marry him, to make his life hers and her life his. She looked helplessly round. What but him was there to build on? Without him— She broke the long silence with, "That is true. We must begin." Then, after a pause during which she tried to think and found she couldn't, "Make up my mind for me."

"Let us be married day after to-morrow," said he. "We can leave for New York on the one o'clock train and sail on Thursday."

"You had it planned!"

"I had several plans," he answered. "That's the best one."

What should she do? Impulsively—why, she did not know—she gave Dory her answer: "Yes, that *is* the best plan. I must begin—at once." And she started up, in a fever to be doing.

Dory, dazed by his unexpected, complete victory, went immediately, lest he should say or do something that would break or weaken the current of her aroused energy. He went without as much as touching her hand. Certainly, if ever man tempted fate to snatch from him the woman he loved, Dory did then; and at that time Del must, indeed, have been strongly drawn to him, or she would have been unable to persist.

The problem of the trousseau was almost as simple for her as for him. She had been extravagant and luxurious, had accumulated really unmanageable quantities of clothing of all kinds, far, far more than any woman without a maid could take care of. The fact that she had not had a maid was in part responsible for this superfluity. She had neither the time nor the patience for making or for directing the thousand exasperating little repairs that are necessary if a woman with a small wardrobe is always to look well. So, whenever repairs were necessary, she bought instead; and as she always kept herself fresh and perfect to the smallest detail she had to buy profusely. As soon as a dress or a hat or a blouse or a parasol, a pair of boots, slippers, stockings, or any of the costly, flimsy, all but unlaunderable underwear she affected, became not quite perfect, she put it aside against that vague day when she should have leisure or inclination for superintending a seamstress. Within two hours of her decision she had a seamstress in the house, and they and her mother were at work. There was no necessity to bother about new dresses. She

would soon be putting off black, and she could get in Paris what she would then need.

In the whirlwind of those thirty-six hours, she had not a moment to think of anything but the material side of the wedding—the preparations for the journey and for the long absence. She was half an hour late in getting down to the front parlor for the ceremony, and she looked so tired from toil and lack of sleep that Dory in his anxiety about her was all but unconscious that they were going through the supposedly solemn marriage rite. Looking back on it afterwards, they could remember little about it—perhaps even less than can the average couple, under our social system which makes a wedding a social function, not a personal rite. They had once in jesting earnest agreed that they would have the word "obey" left out of the vows; but they forgot this, and neither was conscious of repeating "obey" after the preacher. Adelaide was thinking of her trunks, was trying to recall the things she felt she must have neglected in the rush; Dory was worrying over her paleness and the heavy circles under her eyes, was fretting about the train—Del's tardiness had not been in the calculations. Even the preacher, infected by the atmosphere of haste, ran over the sentences, hardly waiting for the responses. Adelaide's mother was hearing the trunks going down to the van, and was impatient to be where she could superintend—there was a very important small trunk, full of underclothes, which she was sure they were overlooking. Arthur was gloomily abstracted, was in fierce combat with the bitter and melancholy thoughts which arose from the contrast he could not but make—this simple wedding, with Dory Hargrave as her groom, when in other circumstances there would have been such pomp and grandeur. He and Mary the cook and Ellen the upstairs girl and old Miss Skeffington, generalissimo of the Hargrave household, were the only persons present keenly conscious that there was in progress a wedding, a supposedly irrevocable union of a man and woman for life and for death and for posterity. Even old Dr. Hargrave was thinking of what Dory was to do on the other side,

was mentally going over the elaborate scheme for his son's guidance which he had drawn up and committed to paper. Judge Torrey, the only outsider, was putting into form the speech he intended to make at the wedding breakfast.

But there was no wedding breakfast—at least, none for bride and groom. The instant the ceremony was over, Mary the cook whispered to Mrs. Ranger: "Mike says they've just got time to miss the train."

"Good gracious!" cried Mrs. Ranger. And she darted out to halt the van and count the trunks. Then she rushed in and was at Adelaide's arm. "Hurry, child!" she exclaimed. "Here is my present for you."

And she thrust into her hand a small black leather case, the cover of a letter of credit. Seeing that Del was too dazed to realize what was going on, she snatched it away and put it into the traveling case which Mary was carrying. Amid much shaking hands and kissing and nervous crying, amid flooding commonplaces and hysterical repetitions of "Good-by! Good luck!" the young people were got off. There was no time for Mary to bring the rice from the kitchen table, but Ellen had sequestered one of Adelaide's old dancing slippers under the front stair. She contrived to get it out and into action, and to land it full in Adelaide's lap by a lucky carrom against the upright of the coach window.

Adelaide looked down at it vaguely. It was one of a pair of slippers she had got for the biggest and most fashionable ball she had ever attended. She remembered it all—the gorgeousness of the rooms, the flowers, the dresses, the favors, her own ecstasy in being where it was supposed to be so difficult to get; how her happiness had been marred in the early part of the evening by Ross's attendance on Helen Galloway in whose honor the ball was given; how he made her happy again by staying beside her the whole latter part of the evening, he and more young men than any other girl had. And here was the slipper, with its handsome buckle torn off, stained, out of shape from having been so long cast aside. Where did it come from? How did it get here? Why had this ghost

suddenly appeared to her? On the opposite seat, beside her traveling case, fashionable, obviously expensive, with her initials in gold, was a bag marked "T. H."—of an unfashionable appearance, obviously inexpensive, painfully new. She could not take her fascinated eyes from it; and the hammering of her blood upon her brain, as the carriage flew toward the station, seemed to be a voice monotonously repeating, "Married—married—" She shuddered. "My fate is settled for life," she said to herself. "I am *married*!"

She dared not look at her husband— Husband! In that moment of cruel memory, of ghastly chopfallen vanity, it was all she could do not visibly to shrink from him. She forgot that he was her best friend, her friend from babyhood almost, Theodore Hargrave. She felt only that he was her husband, her jailer, the representative of all that divided her forever from the life of luxury and show which had so permeated her young blood with its sweet, lingering poison. She descended from the carriage, passed the crowd of gaping, grinning loungers, and entered the train, with cheeks burning and eyes downcast, an ideal bride in appearance of shy and refined modesty. And none who saw her delicate, aristocratic beauty of face and figure and dress could have attributed to her the angry, ugly, snobbish thoughts, like a black core hidden deep in the heart of a bewitching flower.

As he sat opposite her in the compartment, she was exaggerating into glaring faults the many little signs of indifference to fashion in his dress. She had never especially noted before, but now she was noting as a shuddering exhibition of "commonness," that he wore detachable cuffs — and upon this detail her distraught mind fixed as typical. She could not take her eyes off his wrists; every time he moved his arms so that she could see the wristband within his cuff, she felt as if a piece of sandpaper were scraping her skin. He laid his hand on her two gloved hands, folded loosely in her lap. Every muscle, every nerve of her body grew tense; she only just fought down the impulse to snatch her hands away and shriek at him.

She sat rigid, her teeth set, her eyes closed, until her real self got some control over the monstrous, crazy creature raving within her. Then she said: "Please don't—touch me—just now. I've been on such a strain—and I'm almost breaking down."

He drew his hand away. "I ought to have understood," he said. "Would you like to be left alone for a while?"

Without waiting for her answer, he left the compartment to her. She locked the door and let herself loose. When she had had her cry "out," she felt calm; but oh, so utterly depressed. "This is only a mood," she said to herself. "I don't really feel that way toward him. Still—I've made a miserable mistake. I ought not to have married him. I must hide it. I mustn't make him suffer for what's altogether my own fault. I must make the best of it."

When he came back, she proceeded to put her programme into action. All the afternoon he strove with her sweet gentleness and exaggerated consideration for him; he tried to make her see that there was no necessity for this elaborate pose and pretense. But she was too absorbed in her part to heed him. In the evening, soon after they returned to the compartment from the dining car, he rose. "I am going out to smoke," he said. "I'll tell the porter to make up your berth. You must be very tired. I have taken another—out in the car—so that you will not be disturbed."

She grew white, and a timid, terrified look came into her eyes.

He touched her shoulder—gently. "Don't—please!" he said quietly. "In all the years we've known each other, have you ever seen anything in me to make you feel—like—that?"

Her head drooped still lower, and her face became crimson.

"Adelaide, look at me!"

She lifted her eyes until they met his uncertainly.

He put out his hand. "We are friends, aren't we?"

She instantly laid her hand in his.

"Friends," he repeated. "Let us hold fast to that—and let the rest take care of itself."

"I'm ashamed of myself," said she. And in her swift revulsion of feeling there was again opportunity for him. But he was not in the mood to see it.

"You certainly ought to be," replied he, with his frank smile that was so full of the suggestions of health and sanity and good humor. "You'll never get a martyr's crown at *my* expense."

At New York he rearranged their steamer accommodations. It was no longer diffidence and misplaced consideration that moved him permanently to establish the most difficult of barriers between them; it was pride now, for in her first stormy moments in the train he had seen farther into her thoughts than he dared let himself realize.

CHAPTER XVII

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

THE day after the wedding, as Arthur was going home from work, he saw Ross on the lofty seat of a dogcart, driving toward him along lower Monroe Street. His anger instantly flamed and flared; he crushed an oath between his teeth and glanced about for some way to avoid the humiliating meeting. But there was no cross street between him and the on-coming cart. Pride, or vanity, came to his support, as soon as he was convinced that escape was impossible. With an air that was too near to defiance to create the intended impression of indifference, he swung along and, just as the cart was passing, glanced at his high-enthroned former friend.

Ross had not seen him until their eyes met. He drew his horse in so sharply that it reared and pawed in amazement and indignation at the bit's coarse insult to thoroughbred instincts for courteous treatment. He knew Arthur was at work in the factory; but he did not expect to see him in workman's dress, with a dinner pail in his hand. And from his height, he, clad in the carefully careless, ostentatiously unostentatious garments of the "perfect gentleman," gazed speechless at the spectacle. Arthur reddened violently. Not all the daily contrasts thrust upon him in those months at the cooperage had so brought home to his soul the differences of caste. And there came to him for the first time that hatred of inequalities which, repulsive though it is in theory, is yet the true nerver of the strong right arm of progress. It is as characteristic of the homely, human countenance of Democracy as the supercilious

smirk is of the homely, inhuman countenance of caste. Arthur did not want to get up where Ross was seated in such elegant state; he wanted to tear Ross, all the Rosses down. "The damn fool!" he fumed. "He goes lounging about, wasting the money *we* make. It's all wrong. And if we weren't a herd of tame asses, we wouldn't permit it."

And now he began to feel that he was the superior of this showy idler, that his own garments and dinner pail and used hands were the titles to a nobility which could justly look down upon those who filched from the treasury of the toiler the means to buzz and flit and glitter in dronelike ease. "As for these Whitneys," he thought, "mother's right about them." Then he called out in a tone of good-natured contempt, which his stature and his powerful frame and strong, handsome face made effective: "Hello, Ross! When did *you* come to town?"

"This morning," replied Ross. "I heard you were working, but I had no idea it was— I've just been to your house, looking for you, and was on the way to the factory. Father told me to see that you get a suitable position. I'm going to Howells and arrange it. You know, father's been in the East and very busy."

"Don't bother," said Arthur, and there was no pretense in his air of ease. "I've got just what I want. I am carrying out father's plan, and I'm far enough into it to see that he was right."

In unbelieving silence Ross looked down at his former equal with condescending sympathy; how well Arthur knew that look! And he remembered that he had once, so short a time before, regarded it as kindly, and the thoughts behind it as generous!

"I like my job," he continued. "It gives me a sense of doing something useful—of getting valuable education. Already I've had a thousand damn-fool ideas knocked out of my head."

"I suppose it *is* interesting," said Ross, with gracious encouragement. "The associations must be rather trying."

"They *were* rather trying," replied Arthur with a smile. "Trying to the other men, until I got my bearings and lost the silliest of the silly ideas put in my head by college and that sort of thing. But, now that I realize I'm an apprentice and not a gentleman deigning to associate with the common herd, I think I'm less despicable—and less ridiculous. Still, I'm finding it hard to get it through my head that practically everything I learned is false and must be unlearned."

"Don't let your bitterness over the injustice to you swing you too far the other way, Artie," said Ross with a faint smile in his eyes and a suspicious, irritating friendliness in his voice. "You'll soon work out of that class and back where you belong."

Arthur was both angry and amused. No doubt Ross was right as to the origin of this new breadth of his; but a wrong motive may start a man right just as readily as a right motive may start him wrong. Arthur would have admitted frankly his first feelings about his changed position, would have admitted that those feelings still lingered, still seemed to influence him, as grown people often catch themselves thinking in terms of beliefs impressed on them in childhood, but exploded and abandoned at the very threshold of youth. But he knew, also, that his present beliefs and resolves and aspirations were sincere, were sane, were final—the expression of the mind and heart that were really himself. Of what use, however, to argue with Ross? "I could no more convince him," thought Arthur, "than I could myself have been convinced less than a year ago." Besides, of what importance were Ross's beliefs about him or about his views? So he said to him, and his tone and manner were now convincing: "Well, we'll see. However, as long as I'm a workman, I'll stand with my class—just as you stand with your class. And while you are pretending to be generous to us, we'll pretend to be contemptuous of you. You'll think we are living off of your money; we'll think you are living off of our work. You'll say we're earning less than half what we get; we'll say you're stealing more than half what you get. It may amuse you to hear that I am one of the organizers of the

trades union that's starting. I'm on the committee on wages. So some day you and I are likely to meet."

"I don't know much about those things," said Ross politely. "I can see that you're right to ingratiate yourself with those working chaps. It will stand you in good stead when you get on top and have to manage them."

Arthur laughed, and so did Ross. They eyed each the other with covert hostility. "Poor creature!" thought Ross. And "Pup!" thought Arthur. "How could I have wanted Del to marry *him*?" He wished to pass on, but was detained by some suggestion in Ross's manner that he had not yet discharged his mind of its real burden.

"I was glad to see your mother so well," said Ross.

"I wish she were," replied Arthur. "She seemed to be better while the excitement about Del's wedding was on; but as soon as Del and Dory went, she dropped back again. I think the only thing that keeps her from—from joining father is the feeling that, if she were to go, the family income would stop. I feel sure we'd not have her, if father had left us well provided for, as they call it."

"That is true," said Ross, the decent side of his nature now full to the fore. "I can't tell you what a sense of loss I had when your father died. Artie, he was a splendid gentleman. And there is a quality in your mother that makes me feel very humble indeed before her."

Arthur passed, though he noted, the unconscious superciliousness in this tribute; he felt that it was a genuine tribute, that, for all its discoloration in its passage through the tainted outer part of Ross's nature, it had come from the unspoiled, untainted, deepest part. Fortunately for us all, the gold in human nature remains gold, whatever its alloys from base contacts; and it is worth the mining, though there be but a grain of it to the ton of dross. As Ross spoke Arthur warmed to him. "You must come to see us," he said cordially.

Ross became embarrassed, so embarrassed that all his ability to command his feelings went for nothing. "Thank you," said he hurriedly, "but I'm here only for a few hours. I go

away to-night. I came about a matter that—that— I want to get back as soon as possible."

Arthur was mystified by the complete transformation of the self-complacent, superior Ross of a few minutes before. He now noted that Ross was looking almost ill, his eyes sunken, the lids red at the edges, as if from loss of sleep. Under Arthur's scrutiny his embarrassment increased to panic. He nervously shifted the reins, made the horse restless, shook hands with Arthur, reined in, tried to speak, said only, "I must be off—my horse is getting nervous," and was gone.

Arthur looked after him. "That's the sort of chap I was on the way to being when father pulled me up," he reflected. "I wonder if I'll ever get sense enough not to have a sneaking envy of him—and regret?"

If he could have looked in upon Ross's mind, he might have been abruptly thrust far along the toilsome road toward his goal. In this world, roses and thorns have a startling, preposterous way of suddenly exchanging natures so that what was thorn becomes fairest rose, and what was rose becomes most poisonous of thorns. Ross had just fallen an amazed and incredulous victim to this alchemy. Though somewhat uncomfortable and downright unhappy at times, he had been, on the whole, well pleased with himself and his prospects until he heard that Adelaide was actually about to marry Dory. His content collapsed with the foundation on which it was built —the feeling that Adelaide was for no other man, that if at any time he should change his mind he would find her waiting to welcome him gratefully. He took train for Saint X, telling himself that after he got there he could decide what to do. In fact, when he had heard that the wedding was about to be, it was over and Adelaide and Dory were off for New York and Europe; but he did not find this out until he reached Saint X. The man who gave him that final and overwhelming news noticed no change in his face, though looking for signs of emotion; nor did Ross leave him until he had confirmed the impression of a heart at ease. Far along the path between the Country Club and Point Helen he struck into the woods and,

with only the birds and the squirrels as witnesses, gave way to his feelings.

Now, now that she was irrevocably gone, he knew. He had made a hideous mistake; he had been led on by his vanity, led on and on until the trap was closed and sprung; and it was too late. He sat there on a fallen tree with his head aching as if about to explode, with eyes dry and burning and a great horror of heart-hunger sitting before him and staring at him. In their sufferings from defeated desire the selfish expiate their sins.

He had forgotten his engagement to Theresa Howland, the wedding only two weeks away. It suddenly burst in upon his despair like a shout of derisive laughter. "I'll *not* marry her!" he cried aloud. "I *can't* do it!"

But even as he spoke he knew that he could, and would, and must. He had been a miserable excuse for a lover to Theresa; but Theresa had never had love. All the men who had approached her with "intentions" had been fighting hard against their own contempt of themselves for seeking a wife for the sake of her money, and their efforts at love-making had been tame and lame; but Theresa, knowing no better, simply thought men not up to the expectations falsely raised by the romances and the songs. She believed *she* could not but get as good a quality of love as there was going; and Ross, with his delightful, aristocratic indifference, was perfectly satisfactory. Theresa had that thrice-armored self-complacence which nature so often relentingly gives, to more than supply the lack of the charms withheld. She thought she was fascinating beyond any woman of her acquaintance, indeed, of her time. She spent hours in admiring herself, in studying out poses for her head and body and arms, especially her arms, which she regarded as nature's last word on that kind of beauty—a not wholly fanciful notion, as they were not bad, if a bit too short between elbow and wrist, and rather fat at the shoulders. She always thought and, on several occasions in bursts of confidence, had imparted to girl friends that "no man who has once cared for me can ever care for another

woman." Several of her confidantes had precisely the same modest opinion of their own powers; but they laughed at Theresa—behind her back.

Ross knew how vain she was. To break with her, he would have to tell her flatly that he would not marry her. "I'd be doing her no injury," thought he. "Her vanity would root out some explanation which would satisfy her that, whatever might be the cause, it wasn't lack of love for her on my part." But— To break off was unthinkable. The invitations out; the arrangements for the wedding all made; quantities of presents arrived— "I've got to go through with it. I've got to marry her," said Ross. "But God help me, how I shall hate her!"

And, stripped clean of the glamour of her wealth, she rose before him—her nose that was red and queer in the mornings; her little personal habits that got on the nerves, especially a covert self-infatuated smile that flitted over her face at any compliment, however obviously perfunctory; her way of talking about every trivial thing she did—and what did she do that was not trivial?—as if some diarist ought to take it down for the delight of ages to come. As Ross looked at the new-created realistic image of her, he was amazed. "Why, I've always disliked her!" he cried. "I've been lying to myself. I am too low for words," he groaned. "Was there ever such a sneaking cur?" Yes, many a one, full as unconscious of his own qualities as he himself had been until that moment; nor could he find consolation in the fact that he had company, plenty of company, and it of the world's most "gentlemanly" and most "ladylike."

The young man who left that wood, the young man whom Arthur saw that day, had in his heart a consciousness, an ache, of lonely poverty that dress and dogcarts and social position could do little—something, but little—to ease.

He stopped at Chicago and sent word to Windrift that he was ill—not seriously ill, but in such a state that he thought it best to take care of himself, with the wedding so near.

Theresa was just as well pleased to have him away, as it gave her absolute freedom to plan and to superintend her triumph. For the wedding was to be her individual and exclusive triumph, with even Ross as part of the background—the most conspicuous part, but still simply background for her personal splendor.

Old Howland—called Bill until his early career as a pedlar and keeper of a Cheap Jack bazaar was forgotten and who, after the great fire, which wiped out so many pasts and purified and pedigreed Chicago's present aristocracy, called himself William G. Howland, merchant prince, had, in his ideal character for a wealth-chaser, one weakness—a doting fondness for his daughter. When she came into the world, the doctors told him his wife would have no more children; thereafter his manner was always insulting, and usually his tone and words, whenever and of whatever he spoke to her. Women were made by the Almighty solely to bear children to men; his woman had been made to bear him a son. Now that she would never have a son, she was of no use, and it galled him that he could find no plausibly respectable excuse for casting her off, as he cast off worn-out servants in his business. But as the years passed and he saw the various varieties of thorns into which the sons of so many of his fellow-princes developed, he became reconciled to Theresa—*not* to his wife. That unfortunate woman, the daughter of a drunkard and partially deranged by illness and by grief over her husband's brutality toward her, became—or rather, was made by her insistent doctor—what would have been called a drunkard, had she not been the wife of a prince. Her "dipsomania" took an unaggressive form, as she was by nature gentle and sweet; she simply used to shut herself in and drink until she would cry herself into a timid, suppressed hysteria. So secret was she that Theresa never knew the truth about these "spells."

Howland did not like Ross; but when Theresa told him she was going to marry him she had only to cry a little and sit in the old man's lap and tease. "Very well, then," said her father, "you can have him. But he's a gambler, like his father.

They call it finance, but changing the name of a thing only changes the smell of it, not the thing itself. I'm going to tie my money up so that he can't get at it."

"I want you to, papa," replied Theresa, giving him a kiss and a great hug for emphasis. "I don't want anybody to be able to touch *my* property."

For the wedding, Howland gave Theresa a free hand. "I'll pay the bills, no matter what they are," said he. "Give yourself a good time." And Theresa, who had been brought up to be selfish, and was prudent about her impulses only where she suspected them of being generous, proceeded to arrange for herself the wedding that is still talked about in Chicago "society" and throughout the Middle West. A dressmaker from the Rue de la Paix came over with models and samples, and carried back a huge order and a plaster reproduction of Theresa's figure, and elaborate notes on the color of her skin, hair, eyes, and her preferences in shapes of hats. A jeweler, also of the Rue de la Paix, came with jewels—nearly a million dollars' worth—for her to make selections. Her boots and shoes and slippers she got from Rowney, in Fifth Avenue, who, as everybody knows, makes nothing for less than thirty-five dollars, and can put a hundred dollars worth of price, if not of value, into a pair of evening slippers. Theresa was proud of her feet; they were short and plump, and had those abrupt, towering insteps that are regarded by the people who have them as unfailing indications of haughty lineage, just as the people who have flat feet dwell fondly upon the flat feet of the Wittlesbachs, kings in Bavaria. She was not easy to please in the matter of casements for those feet; also, as she was very short in stature, she had to get three and a half extra inches of height out of her heels; and to make that sort of heel so that it can even be hobbled upon is not easy or cheap. Once Theresa, fretting about her red-ended nose and muddy skin, had gone to a specialist. "Let me see your foot," said he; and when he saw the heel, he exclaimed: "Cut that tight, high-heeled thing out or you'll never get a decent skin, and your eyes will trouble you by the time you are thirty." But Theresa, before adopting

such drastic measures, went to a beauty doctor. He assured her that she could be cured without the sacrifice of the heel, and that the weakness of her eyes would disappear a year or so after marriage. And he was soon going into ecstasies over her improvement, over the radiance of her beauty. She saw with his eyes and ceased to bother about nose or skin—they were the least beautiful of her beauties, but— "One can't expect to be absolutely perfect. Besides, the absolutely perfect kind of beauty might be monotonous."

The two weeks before the wedding were the happiest of her life. All day long, each day, vans were thundering up to the rear doors of Windrift, each van loaded to bursting with new and magnificent, if not beautiful costliness. The house was full of the employees of florists, dressmakers, decorators, each one striving to outdo the other in servility. Theresa was like an autocratic sovereign, queening it over these menials and fancying herself adored. They showed *so* plainly that they were awed by her and were in ecstasies of admiration over her taste. And, as the grounds and the house were transformed, Theresa's exaltation grew until she went about fairly dizzy with delight in herself.

The bridesmaids and ushers came. They were wealth-worshipers all, and their homage lifted Theresa still higher. They marched and swept about in her train, lording it over the menials and feeling that they were not a whit behind the grand ladies and gentlemen of the French courts of the eighteenth century. They had read the memoirs of that idyllic period diligently, had read with minds only for the flimsy glitter which hid the vulgarity and silliness and shame as a gorgeous robe hastily donned by a dirty chambermaid might conceal from a casual glance the sardonic and repulsive contrast. The wedding day approached all too swiftly for Theresa and her court. True, that would be the magnificent climax; but they knew it would also dissipate the spell—after the wedding, life in twentieth century America again.

"If only it don't rain!" said Harry Legendre.

"It won't," replied Theresa with conviction—and her look

of command toward the heavens made the courtiers exchange winks and smiles behind her back. They were courtiers to wealth, not to Theresa, just as their European prototypes are awed before a "king's most excellent Majesty," not before his swollen body and shrunken brain.

And it did not rain. Ross arrived in the red sunset of the wedding eve, Tom Glenning, his best man, coming with him. They were put, with the ushers, in rooms at the pavilion where were the squash courts and winter tennis courts and the swimming baths. Theresa and Ross stood on the front porch alone in the moonlight, looking out over the enchantmentlike scene into which the florists and decorators had transformed the terraces and gardens. She was a little alarmed by his white face and sunken eyes; but she accepted his reassurances without question—she would have disbelieved anything which did not fit in with her plans. And now, as they gazed out upon that beauty under the soft shimmer of the moonlight, her heart suddenly expanded in tenderness. "I am *so* happy," she murmured, slipping an arm through his.

Her act called for a return pressure. He gave it, much as a woman's salutation would have made him unconsciously move to lift his hat.

"While Adèle was dressing me for dinner—" she began.

At that name, he moved so that her arm dropped from his; but she did not connect her maid with her former bosom friend.

"I got to thinking about those who are not so well off as we," she went on; "about the poor. And so, I've asked papa to give all his employees and the servants nice presents, and I've sent five thousand dollars to be divided among the churches in the town, down there—for the poor. Do you think I did wrong? I'm always afraid of encouraging those kind of people to expect too much of us."

She had asked that he might echo the eulogies she had been bestowing upon herself. But he disappointed her. "Oh, I guess it was well enough," he replied. "I must go down to the pavilion. I'm fagged, and you must be, too."

The suggestion that he might not be looking his best on the morrow was enough to change the current of her thoughts. "Yes, *do*, dear!" she urged. "And don't let Tom and Harry and the rest keep you up."

They did not even see him. He sat in the shed at the end of the boat-landing, staring out over the lake until the moon set. Then he went to the pavilion. It was all dark; he stole in, and to bed, but not to sleep. Before his closed but seeing eyes floated a vision of two women—Adelaide as he had last seen her, Theresa as she looked in the mornings, as she had looked that afternoon.

He was haggard next day. But it was becoming to him, gave the finishing touch to his customary bored, distinguished air; and he was dressed in a way that made every man there envy him. As Theresa, on insignificant-looking little Bill Howland's arm, advanced to meet him at the altar erected under a canopy of silk and flowers in the bower of lilies and roses into which the big drawing-room had been transformed, she thrilled with pride. *There* was a man one could look at with delight, as one said, "My husband!"

It was a perfect day—perfect weather, everything going forward without hitch, everybody looking his and her best, and "Mama" providentially compelled by one of her "spells" to keep to her room. Those absences of hers were so frequent and so much the matter of course that no one gave them a second thought. Theresa had studied up the customs at fashionable English and French weddings, and had combined the most aristocratic features of both. Perhaps the most successful feature was when she and Ross, dressed for the going away, walked, she leaning upon his arm, across the lawns to the silk marquee where the wedding breakfast was served. Before them, walking backward, were a dozen little girls from the village school, all in white, strewing roses from beribboned baskets, and singing, "Behold! The bride in beauty comes!"

"Well, I'm glad it's all over," said Theresa as she settled back in a chair in the private car that was to take them to Wilderness Lodge, in northern Wisconsin for the honeymoon.

"So am I," Ross disappointed her by saying. "I've felt like a damn fool ever since I began to face that gaping gang."

"But you must admit it was beautiful," objected Theresa pouting.

Ross shut his teeth together to keep back a rude reply. He was understanding how men can be brutal to women. To look at her was to have an all but uncontrollable impulse to rise up and in a series of noisy and profane explosions reveal to her the truth that was poisoning him. After a while, a sound from her direction made him glance at her. She was sobbing. He did not then know that, to her, tears were simply the means to getting what she wanted; so his heart softened. While she was thinking that she was looking particularly well and femininely attractive, he was pitying her as a forlorn creature, who could never inspire love and ought to be treated with consideration, much as one tries to hide by an effusive show of courtesy the repulsion deformity inspires.

"Don't cry, Theresa," he said gently, trying to make up his mind to touch her. But he groaned to himself, "I can't! I must wait until I can't see her." And he ordered the porter to bring him whisky and soda.

"Won't you join me?" he said.

"You know, I never touch anything to drink," she replied. "Papa and Dr. Massey both made me promise not to."

Ross's hand, reaching out for the bottle of whisky, drew slowly back. He averted his face that she might not see. He knew about her mother—and knew Theresa did not. It had never entered his head that the weakness of the mother might be transmitted to the daughter. Now— Just before they left, Dr. Massey had taken him aside and, in a manner that would have impressed him instantly but for his mood, had said: "Mr. Whitney, I want you never to forget that Theresa must not be depressed. You must take the greatest care of her. We must talk about it again—when you return."

And *this* was what he meant!

He almost leaped to his feet at Theresa's softly interrupting voice, "Are you ill, dear?"

"A little—the strain—I'll be all right—" And leaving the whisky untouched, he went into his own compartment. As he was closing the door, he gave a gasp of dismay. "She might begin now!" he muttered. He rang for the porter. "Bring that bottle," he said. Then, as an afterthought of "appearances," "And the soda and a glass."

"I can get you another, sir," said the porter.

"No—that one," ordered Ross.

Behind the returning porter came Theresa. "Can't I do something for you, dear? Rub your head, or fix the pillows?"

Ross did not look at her. "Do, please—fix the pillows," he said. "Then if I can sleep a little, I'll be all right, and will soon rejoin you."

"Can't I fix your drink for you?" she asked, putting her hand on the bottle.

Ross restrained an impulse to snatch it away from her. "Thanks, no—dear," he answered. "I've decided to swear off —with you. Is it a go?"

She laughed. "Silly!" she murmured, bending and kissing him. "If you wish."

"That settles it," said Ross, with a forced, pained smile. "We'll neither of us touch it. I was getting into the habit of taking too much—not really too much—but— Oh, you understand."

"That's the way father feels about it," said Theresa, laughing. "We never drink at home—except mother when she has a spell, and has to be kept up on brandy."

Ross threw his arm up to hide his face. "Let me sleep, do," he said gently.

CHAPTER XVIII

LOVE, THE BLUNDERER

AS Dory had several months' work before him at Paris, he and Del took a furnished apartment in the Rue de Rivoli, high up, attractive within, before its balconied windows the stately trees, the fountains, the bright flower beds, the thronged playgrounds of the Tuileries. But they were not long left to themselves; in their second week, the *concierge's* little girl late one afternoon brought Janet's card up to Adelaide. As Janet entered, Del regretted having yielded to impulse and admitted her. For, the granddaughter of "blue-jeans Jones," the tavern keeper, was looking the elegant and idle aristocrat from the tip of the tall, graceful plume in her most Parisian of hats to the buckles of shoes which matched her dress, parasol, and jewels. A lovely Janet, a marvelous Janet; a toilette it must have taken her two hours to make, and spiritual hazel eyes that forbade the idea of her giving so much as a moment's thought to any material thing, even to dress. Adelaide had spent with the dressmakers a good part of the letter of credit her mother slipped into her traveling bag at the parting; she herself was in a negligee which had as much style as Janet's costume and, in addition, individual taste, whereof Janet had but little; and besides, while her beauty had the same American delicateness, as of the finest, least florid Sèvres or Dresden, it also had a look of durability which Janet's beauty lacked—for Janet's beauty depended upon those fragilities, coloring and contour. Adelaide was not notably vain, had a clear sense of her defects, tended to exaggerate them, rather than her many and decisive good points. It was

not Janet's appearance that unsettled Del; she brought into the room the atmosphere Del had breathed during all those important years of girlhood, and had not yet lost her fondness for. It depressed her at once about herself to note how this vision of the life that had been but would never be again affected her.

"You are sad, dear," said Janet, as she kissed her on both cheeks with a diffusing of perfume that gave her a sense of a bouquet of priceless exotics waving before her face.

"You are sad, dear," she repeated, with that air of tenderest sympathy which can be the safest cover for subtle malice.

Adelaide shrank.

"I'm so glad I've come when I may be able to do some good."

Adelaide winced.

"How cozy these rooms are——"

At "cozy" Adelaide shuddered. No one ever used, except apologetically, that word, which is the desperate last resort of compliment.

"And what a beautiful view from the windows—so much better than ours at the pompous old Bristol, looking out on that bare square!"

Adelaide laughed. Not by chance, she knew, did Miss Janet, with her softly sheathed but swift and sharp cat claws, drag in the delicate hint that while Adelaide was "cozy" in an unaristocratic *maison meublée,* she herself was ensconced in the haunts of royalty; and it suddenly came back to Del how essentially cheap was "aristocracy."

"But I mustn't look at those adorable gardens," continued Janet. "They fill me with longing for the country, for the pure, simple things. I am so sick of the life mamma and I lead. And you are married to dear Dory—how romantic! And I hear that Arthur is to marry Margaret Schultz—or whatever her name was—that splendid creature! She was a *dear* friend of the trained nurse I had last spring, and what the nurse told me about her made me positively love her. Such character! And getting ready to lead *such* a useful life." This

without the least suggestion of struggle with a difficult subject. "Arthur is a noble fellow, too. If we had been in spiritual accord, I'd have loved to go and lead his life with him."

Adelaide was in high good humor now—Janet was too preposterous to be taken seriously. "What do you want me to do for you, Jen?" said she.

"Why, nothing!" exclaimed Janet, looking a little wonder and much reproach.

Del laughed. "Now, really, Jen," said she. "You know you never in the world went to all the trouble of getting my address, and then left royalty at the Bristol for a *maison meublée,* four flights up and no elevator, just to *see* me!"

"I had thought of something I was sure would give you pleasure," said Janet, injured.

"What do you want me to do for you?" repeated Adelaide, with smiling persistence.

"Mamma and I have an invitation to spend a week at Besançon—you know, it's the splendid old chateau Louis Treize used to love to visit. It's still the seat of the Saint Berthè family, and the present Marquis, a *dear* friend of ours, is such a wonderful, fine old nobleman—so simple and gracious and full of epigrams. He really ought to wear lace and ruffles and a beautiful peruke. At any rate, as I was saying, he has asked us down. But mamma has to go to England to see papa before he sails, and I thought you'd love to visit the chateau—you and Dory. It's so poetic—and historic, too."

"Your mother is going away and you'll be unable to make this visit unless you get a chaperon, and you want me to chaperon you," said Adelaide, who was not minded to be put in the attitude of being the recipient of a favor from this particular young woman at this particular time, when in truth she was being asked to confer a favor. "Adversity" had already sharpened her wits to the extent of making her alert to the selfishness disguised as generosity which the prosperous love to shower upon their little brothers and sisters of the poor. She knew at once that Janet must have been desperately off for a chaperon to come to her.

A look of irritation marred Janet's spiritual countenance for an instant. But she never permitted anything whatsoever to stand between her and what she wished. She masked herself and said sweetly: "Won't you go, dear? I know you'll enjoy it—you and Dory. And it would be a great favor to me. I don't see how I can go unless you consent. You know, I mayn't go with just anyone."

Adelaide's first impulse was to refuse; but she did not. She put off decision by saying, "I'll ask Dory to-night, and let you know in the morning. Will that do?"

"Perfectly," said Janet, rising to go. "I'll count on you, for I know Dory will want to see the chateau and get a glimpse of life in the old aristocracy. It will be *so* educational."

Dory felt the change in Del the instant he entered their little *salon*—felt that during the day some new element had intruded into their friendly life together, to interrupt, to unsettle, and to cloud the brightening vistas ahead. At the mention of Janet he began to understand. He saw it all when she said with a show of indifference that deceived only herself, "Wouldn't you like to go down to Besançon?"

"Not I," replied he coldly. "Europe is full of that kind of places. You can't glance outdoors without seeing a house or a ruin where the sweat and blood of peasants were squandered."

"Janet thought you'd be interested in it as history," persisted Adelaide, beginning to feel irritated.

"That's amusing," said Dory. "You might have told her that scandal isn't history, that history never was made in such places. As for the people who live there now, they're certainly not worth while—the same pretentious ignoramuses that used to live there, except they no longer have fangs."

"You ought not to be so prejudiced," said Adelaide, who in those days often found common sense irritating. She had the all but universal habit of setting down to "prejudice" such views as are out of accord with the set of views held by one's business or professional or social associates.

Her irritation confirmed Dory's suspicions. "I spoke only for myself," said he. "Of course, you'll accept Janet's invitation. She included me only as a matter of form."

"I couldn't, without you."

"Why not?"

"Well—wouldn't, then."

"But I urge you to go—want you to go! I can't possibly leave Paris, not for a day—at present."

"I shan't go without you," said Adelaide, trying hard to make her tone firm and final.

Dory leaned across the table toward her—they were in the garden of a café in the Latin Quarter. "If you don't go, Del," said he, "you'll make me feel that I am restraining you in a way far meaner than a direct request not to go. You want to go. I want you to go. There is *no* reason why you shouldn't."

Adelaide smiled shamefacedly. "You honestly want to get rid of me?"

"Honestly. I'd feel like a jailer, if you didn't go."

"What'll you do in the evenings?"

"Work later, dine later, go to bed and get up earlier."

"Work—always work," she said. She sighed, not wholly insincerely. "I wish I weren't so idle and aimless. If I were the woman I ought to be——"

"None of that—none of that!" he cried, in mock sternness.

"I ought to be interested in your work."

"Why, I thought you were!" he exclaimed, in smiling astonishment.

"Oh, of course, in a way—in an 'entertainment' sort of way. I like to hear you talk about it—who wouldn't? But I don't give the kind of interest I should—the interest that thinks and suggests and stimulates."

"Don't be too sure of that," said Dory. "The 'helpful' sort of people are usually a nuisance."

But she knew the truth, though passion might still be veiling it from him. Life, before her father's will forced an

abrupt change, had been to her a showman, submitting his exhibits for her gracious approval, shifting them as soon as she looked as if she were about to be bored; and the change had come before she had lived long enough to exhaust and weary of the few things he has for the well-paying passive spectator, but not before she had formed the habit of making only the passive spectator's slight mental exertion.

"Dory is so generous," she thought, with the not acutely painful kind of remorse we lay upon the penitential altar for our own shortcomings, "that he doesn't realize how I'm shirking and letting him do all the pulling." And to him she said, "If you could have seen into my mind while Janet was here, you'd give me up as hopeless."

Dory laughed. "I had a glimpse of it just now—when you didn't like it because I couldn't see my way clear to taking certain people so seriously as you think they deserve."

"But you *are* prejudiced on that subject," she maintained.

"And ever shall be," admitted he, so good-humoredly that she could not but respond. "It's impossible for me to forget that every luxurious idler means scores who have to work long hours for almost nothing in order that he may be of no use to the world or to himself."

"You'd have the whole race on a dead level," said Adelaide.

"Of material prosperity—yes," replied Dory. "A high dead level. I'd abolish the coarse, brutal contrasts between waste and want. Then there'd be a chance for the really interesting contrasts—the infinite varieties of thought and taste and character and individuality."

"I see," said Adelaide, as if struck by a new idea. "You'd have the contrasts, differences among flowers, not merely between flower and weed. You'd abolish the weeds."

"Root and stalk," answered Dory, admiring her way of putting it. "My objection to these aristocratic ideals is that they are so vulgar—and so dishonest. Is that prejudice?"

"No—oh, no!" replied Del sincerely. "Now, it seems to me, I don't care to go with Janet."

"Not to oblige me—very particularly? I want you to go. I want you to see for yourself, Del."

She laughed. "Then I'll go—but only because you ask it."

That was indeed an elegant company at Besançon—elegant in dress, elegant in graceful carelessness of manners, elegant in graceful sinuosities of cleverly turned phrases. But after the passing of the first and second days' sensations, Hiram and Ellen Ranger's daughter began to have somewhat the same feeling she remembered having as a little girl, when she went to both the afternoon and the evening performances of the circus. These people, going through always the same tricks in the same old narrow ring of class ideas, lost much of their charm after a few repetitions of their undoubtedly clever and attractive performance; she even began to see how they would become drearily monotonous. "No wonder they look bored," she thought. "They are." What enormous importance they attached to trifles! What ludicrous tenacity in exploded delusions! And what self-complacent claiming of remote, powerful ancestors who had founded their families, when those ancestors would have disclaimed them as puny nonentities. Their ideas were wholly provided for them, precisely as were their clothes and every artistic thing that gave them "background." They would have made as absurd a failure of trying to evolve the one as the other. Yet they posed—and were widely accepted—as the superiors of those who made their clothes and furniture and of those who made their ideas. And she had thought Dory partly insincere, partly prejudiced when he had laughed at them. Why, he had only shown the plainest kind of American good sense. As for snobbishness, was not the silly-child American brand of it less ridiculous than this unblushing and unconcealed self-reverence, without any physical, mental or material justification whatsoever? They hadn't good manners even, because—as Dory had once said—no one could have really good manners who believed, and acted upon the belief, that he was the superior of most of the members of his own family—the human race.

"I suppose I could compress myself back into being satisfied with this sort of people and things," she thought, as she looked round the ballroom from which pose and self-consciousness and rigid conventionality had banished spontaneous gayety. "I suppose I could even again come to fancying this the only life. But I certainly don't care for it now."

But, although Adelaide was thus using her eyes and her mind—her own eyes and her own mind—in observing what was going on around her, she did not disconcert the others, not even Janet, by expressing her thoughts. Common sense—absolute common sense—always sounds incongruous in a conventional atmosphere. In its milder forms it produces the effect of wit; in stronger doses it is a violent irritant; in large quantity, it causes those to whom it is administered to regard the person administering it as insane. Perhaps Adelaide might have talked more or less frankly to Janet had Janet not been so obviously in the highest of her own kind of heavens. She was raised to this pinnacle by the devoted attentions of the Viscount Brunais, eldest son of Saint Berthè and the most agreeable and adaptable of men, if the smallest and homeliest. Adelaide spoke of his intelligence to Janet, when they were alone before dinner on the fourth day, and Janet at once responded.

"And such a soul!" she exclaimed. "He inherits all the splendid, noble traditions of their old, *old* family. You see in his face that he is descended from generations of refinement and — and — freedom from contact with vulgarizing work, don't you?"

"That hadn't struck me," said Adelaide amiably. "But he's a well-meaning, good-hearted little man, and, of course, he feels as at home in the surroundings he's had all his life as a bird on a bough. Who doesn't?"

"But when you know him better, when you know him as I know him—" Janet's expression disclosed the secret.

"But won't you be lonely—away off here—among—foreign people?" said Adelaide.

"Oh, I should *love* it here!" exclaimed Janet. "It seems

to me I—he and I—must have lived in this very chateau in a former existence. We have talked about it, and he agrees with me. We are *so* harmonious."

"You've really made up your mind to—to marry him?" Adelaide had almost said "to buy him"; she had a sense that it was her duty to disregard Janet's pretenses, and "buy" was so exactly the word to use with these people to whom money was the paramount consideration, the thought behind every other thought, the feeling behind every other feeling, the mainspring of their lives, the mainstay of all the fictions of their aristocracy.

"That depends on father," replied Janet. "Mother has gone to talk to him about it."

"I'm sure your father won't stand between you and happiness," said Adelaide.

"But he doesn't understand these aristocratic people," replied she. "Of course, if it depended upon Aristide and me, we should be married without consulting anybody. But he can't legally marry without his father's consent, and his father naturally wants proper settlements. It's a cruel law, don't you think?"

Adelaide thought not; she thought it, on the contrary, an admirable device to "save the face" of a mercenary lover posing as a sentimentalist and money-spurner. But she merely said, "I think it's most characteristic, most aristocratic." She knew Janet, how shrewd she was, how thoroughly she understood the "coarse side of life." She added, "And your father'll come round."

"I wish I could believe it," sighed Janet. "The Saint Berthès have an exaggerated notion of papa's wealth. Besides, they need a good deal. They were robbed horribly by those dreadful revolutionists. They used to own all this part of the country. All these people round here with their little farms were once the peasants of Aristide's ancestors. Now—even this chateau has a mortgage on it. I couldn't keep back the tears, while Aristide was telling me."

Adelaide thought of Charles Whitney listening to that same

recital, and almost laughed. "Well, I feel sure it will turn out all right," she said. "Your mother'll see to that. And I believe you'll be very, very happy." Theatricals in private life was Janet's passion — why should she not be happy? Frenchmen were famous for their politeness and consideration to their wives; Aristide would never let her see or feel that she bored him, that her reverence for the things he was too intelligent and modern not to despise appealed to him only through his sense of humor. Janet would push her shrewd, soulful way into social leadership, would bring her children up to be more aristocratic than the children of the oldest aristocrats.

Adelaide smiled as she pictured it all—smiled, yet sighed. She was not under Janet's fixed and unshakable delusions. She saw that high-sounding titles were no more part of the personalities bearing them than the mass of frankly false hair so grandly worn by Aristide's grand-aunt was part of the wisp-like remnant of natural head covering. But that other self of hers, so reluctant to be laughed or frowned down and out by the self that was Hiram Ranger's daughter, still forced her to share in the ancient, ignorant allegiance to "appearances." She did not appreciate how bored she was, how impatient to be back with Dory, the never monotonous, the always interesting, until she discovered that Janet, with her usual subtlety, had arranged for them to stay another week, had made it impossible for her to refuse without seeming to be disobliging and even downright rude. They were to have returned to Paris on a Monday. On Sunday she wrote Dory to telegraph for her on Tuesday.

"I'd hate to be looking forward to that life of dull foolery," thought she, as the mossy bastions of Besançon drifted from her horizon—she was journeying up alone, Janet staying on with one of the Saint Berthè women as chaperone. "It is foolery and it is dull. I don't see how grown-up people endure it, unless they've never known any better. Yet I seem unable to content myself with the life father stands for—and Dory." She appreciated the meaning of the legend of the

creature with the two bodies and the two wills, each always opposed to the other, with the result that all motion was in a dazing circle in which neither wished to go. "Still," she concluded, "I *am* learning"—which was the truth; indeed, she was learning with astonishing rapidity for a girl who had had such an insidiously wrong start and was getting but slight encouragement.

Dory, of course, was helping her, but not as he might. Instead of bringing to bear that most powerful of influences, the influence of passionate love, he held to his stupid compact with his supersensitive self—the compact that he would never intrude his longings upon her. He constantly reminded himself how often woman gives through a sense of duty or through fear of alienating or wounding one she respects and likes; and, so he saw in each impulse to enter Eden boldly a temptation to him to trespass, a temptation to her to mask her real feelings and suffer it. The mystery in which respectable womanhood is kept veiled from the male, has bred in him an awe of the female that she does not fully realize or altogether approve—though she is not slow to advantage herself of it. In the smaller cities and towns of the West, this awe of respectable womanhood exists in a degree difficult for the sophisticated to believe possible, unless they have had experience of it. Dory had never had that familiarity with women which breeds knowledge of their absolute and unmysterious humanness. Thus, not only did he not have the key which enables its possessor to unlock them; he did not even know how to use it when Del offered it to him, all but thrust it into his hand. Poor Dory, indeed—but let only those who have not loved too well to love wisely strut at his expense by pitying him; for, in matters of the heart, sophisticated and unsophisticated act much alike. "Men would dare much more, if they knew what women think," says George Sand. It is also true that the men who dare most, who win most, are those who do not stop to bother about what the women think. Thought does not yet govern the world, but appetite and action—bold appetite and the courage of it.

CHAPTER XIX

MADELENE

TO give himself, journeyman cooper, the feeling of ease and equality, Arthur dressed, with long-discontinued attention to detail, from his extensive wardrobe which the eighteen months since its last accessions had not impaired or antiquated. And, in the twilight of an early September evening, he went forth to settle the matter that had become the most momentous.

There is in dress a something independent of material and cut and even of the individuality of the wearer; there is a spirit of caste. If the lady dons her maid's dress, some subtle essence of the menial permeates her, even to her blood, her mind, and heart. The maid, in madame's dress, putting on "airs," is merely giving an outlet to that which has entered into her from her clothes. Thus, Arthur assumed again with his "*grande toilette*" the feeling of the caste from which he had been ejected. Madelene, come herself to open the door for him, was in a summer dress of no pretentions to style other than that which her figure, with its large, free, splendid lines, gave whatever she happened to wear. His nerves, his blood, responded to her beauty, as always; her hair, her features, the grace of the movements of that strong, slender, supple form, gave him the sense of her kinship with freedom and force and fire and all things keen and bright. But stealthily and subtly it came to him, in this mood superinduced by his raiment, that in marrying her he was, after all, making sacrifices—she was ascending socially, he descending, condescending. The feeling was far too vague to be at all conscious; it is, however, just those hazy, stealthy feelings

that exert the most potent influence upon us. When the strong are conquered is it not always by feeble forces from the dark and from behind?

"You have had good news," said Madelene, when they were in the dim daylight on the creeper-screened back porch. For such was her generous interpretation of his expression of self-confidence and self-satisfaction.

"Not yet," he replied, looking away reflectively. "But I hope for it."

There wasn't any mistaking the meaning of that tone; she knew what was coming. She folded her hands in her lap, and there softly entered and pervaded her a quiet, enormous content that made her seem the crown of the quiet beauty of that evening sky whose ocean of purple-tinted crystal stretched away toward the shores of the infinite.

"Madelene," he began in a self-conscious voice, "you know what my position is, and what I get, and my prospects. But you know what I was, too; and so, I feel I've the right to ask you to marry me—to wait until I get back to the place from which I had to come down."

The light was fading from the sky, from her eyes, from her heart. A moment before he had been there, so near her, so at one with her; now he was far away, and this voice she heard wasn't his at all. And his words— She felt alone in the dark and the cold, the victim of a cheat upon her deepest feelings.

"I was bitter against my father at first," he went on. "But since I have come to know you I have forgiven him. I am grateful to him. If it hadn't been for what he did I might never have learned to appreciate you, to——"

"Don't—*please*!" she said in the tone that is from an aching heart. "Don't say any more."

Arthur was astounded. He looked at her for the first time since he began; instantly fear was shaking his self-confidence at its foundations. "Madelene!" he exclaimed. "I know that you love me!"

She hid her face in her hands—the sight of them, long and narrow and strong, filled him with the longing to seize them,

to feel the throb of their life thrill from them into him, troop through and through him like victory-bringing legions into a besieged city. But her broken voice stopped him. "And I thought you loved me," she said.

"You know I do!" he cried.

She was silent.

"What is it, Madelene?" he implored. "What has come between us? Does your father object because I am—am not well enough off?"

She dropped her hands from before her face and looked at him. The first time he saw her he had thought she was severe; ever since he had wondered how he could have imagined severity into a countenance so gentle and sweet. Now he knew that his first impression was not imaginary; for she had again the expression with which she had faced the hostile world of Saint X until he, his love, came into her life. "It is I that must ask you what has changed you, Arthur," she said, more in sadness than in bitterness, though in both. "I don't seem to know you this evening."

Arthur lost the last remnant of his self-consciousness. He saw he was about to lose, if indeed he had not already lost, that which had come to mean life to him—the happiness from this woman's beauty, the strength from her character, the sympathy from her mind and heart. It was in terror that he asked: "Why, Madelene? What is it? What have I done?" And in dread he studied her firm, regular profile, a graceful strength that was Greek, and so wonderfully completed by her hair, blue black and thick and wavy about the temple and ear and the nape of the neck.

The girl did not answer immediately; he thought she was refusing to hear, yet he could find no words with which to try to stem the current of those ominous thoughts. At last she said: "You talk about the position you have 'come down from' and the position you are going back to—and that you are grateful to your father for having brought you down where you were humble enough to find me."

"Madelene!"

"Wait!" she commanded. "You wish to know what is the matter with me. Let me tell you. We didn't receive you here because you are a cooper or because you had been rich. I never thought about your position or your prospects. A woman —at least a woman like me—doesn't love a man for his position, doesn't love him for his prospects. I've been taking you at just what you were—or seemed to be. And you—you haven't come, asking me to marry you. You treat me like one of those silly women in what they call 'society' here in Saint X. You ask me to wait until you can support me fashionably—I who am not fashionable—and who will always support myself. What you talked isn't what I call love, Arthur. I don't want to hear any more about it—or, we might not be able to be even friends."

She paused; but Arthur could not reply. To deny was impossible, and he had no wish to attempt to make excuses. She had shown him to himself, and he could only echo her just scorn.

"As for waiting," she went on, "I am sure, from what you say, that if you ever got back in the lofty place of a parasite living idly and foolishly on what you abstracted from the labor of others, you'd forget me—just as your rich friends have forgotten you." She laughed bitterly. "O Arthur, Arthur, what a fraud you are! Here, I've been admiring your fine talk about your being a laborer, about what you'd do if you ever got the power. And it was all simply envy and jealousy and trying to make yourself believe you weren't so low down in the social scale as you thought you were. You're too fine a gentleman for Madelene Schulze, Arthur. Wait till you get back your lost paradise; then take a wife who gives her heart only where her vanity permits. You don't want *me*, and I—don't want you!"

Her voice broke there. With a cry that might have been her name or just an inarticulate call from his heart to hers, he caught her in his arms, and she was sobbing against his shoulder. "You can't mean it, Madelene," he murmured, holding her tight and kissing her cheek, her hair, her ear. "You don't mean it."

"Oh, yes, I do," she sobbed. "But—I love you, too."

"Then everything else will straighten out of itself. Help me, Madelene. Help me to be what we both wish me to be—what I can't help being, with you by my side."

When a vanity of superiority rests on what used to be, it dies much harder than when it rests upon what is. But Arthur's self-infatuation, based though it was on the "used-to-be," then and there crumbled and vanished forever. Love cleared his sight in an instant, where reason would have striven in vain against the stubborn prejudices of snobbism. Madelene's instinct had searched out the false ring in his voice and manner; it was again instinct that assured her all was now well. And she straightway, and without hesitation from coquetry or doubt, gave herself frankly to the happiness of the love that knows it is returned in kind and in degree.

"Yes, everything else will come right," she said. "For you *are* strong, Arthur."

"I shall be," was his reply, as he held her closer. "Do I not love a woman who believes in me?"

"And who believes because she knows." She drew away to look at him. "You *are* like your father!" she exclaimed. "Oh, my dear, my love, how rich he made you—and me!"

At breakfast, the next morning, he broke the news to his mother. Instead of returning his serene and delighted look she kept her eyes on her plate and was ominously silent. "When you are well acquainted with her, mother, you'll love her," he said. He knew what she was thinking—Dr. Schulze's "unorthodox" views, to put it gently; the notorious fact that his daughters did not frown on them; the family's absolute lack of standing from the point of view of reputable Saint X.

"Well," said his mother finally, and without looking at her big, handsome son, "I suppose you're set on it."

"Set—that's precisely the word," replied Arthur. "We're only waiting for your consent and her father's."

"I ain't got anything to do with it," said she, with a pathetic attempt at a smile. "Nor the old doctor, either, judging

by the look of the young lady's eyes and chin. I never thought you'd take to a strong-minded woman."

"You wouldn't have her *weak*-minded, would you, mother?"

"There's something between."

"Yes," said he. "There's the woman whose mind is weak when it ought to be strong, and strong when it ought to be weak. I decided for one like you, mother dear—one that would cure me of foolishness and keep me cured."

"A female doctor!"

Arthur laughed. "And she's going to practice, mother. We shouldn't have enough to live on with only what I'd make —or am likely to make anyway soon."

Mrs. Ranger lifted her drooping head in sudden panic. "Why, you'll live *here*, won't you?"

"Of course," replied Arthur, though, as a matter of fact, he hadn't thought where they would live. He hastened to add, "Only we've got to pay board."

"I guess we won't quarrel about that," said the old woman, so immensely relieved that she was almost resigned to the prospect of a Schulze, a strong-minded Schulze and a practicing female doctor, as a daughter-in-law.

"Madelene is coming up to see you this morning," continued Arthur. "I know you'll make her—welcome." This wistfully, for he was now awake to the prejudices his mother must be fighting.

"I'll have the horses hitched up, and go and see her," said Ellen, promptly. "She's a good girl. Nobody could ever say a word against her character, and that's the main thing." She began to contrast Madelene and Janet, and the situation brightened. At least, she was getting a daughter-in-law whom she could feel at ease with, and for whom she could have respect, possibly even liking of a certain reserved kind.

"I suggested that you'd come," Arthur was replying. "But Madelene said she'd prefer to come to you. She thinks it's her place, whether it's etiquette or not. We're not going to go in for etiquette—Madelene and I."

Mrs. Ranger looked amused. This from the young man who had for years been "picking" at her because she was unconventional! "People will misunderstand you, mother," had been his oft-repeated polite phrase. She couldn't resist a mild revenge. "People'll misunderstand, if she comes. They'll think she's running after me."

Like all renegades, the renegades from the religion of conventionality are happiest when they are showing their contempt for that before which they once knelt. "Let 'em think," retorted Arthur cheerfully. "I'll telephone her it's all right," he said, as he rose from the table, "and she'll be up here about eleven."

And exactly at eleven she came, not a bit self-conscious or confused. Mrs. Ranger looked up at her—she was more than a head the taller—and found a pair of eyes she thought finest of all for their honesty looking down into hers. "I reckon we've got—to kiss," said she, with a nervous laugh.

"I reckon so," said Madelene, kissing her, and then, after a glance and an irresistible smile, kissing her again. "You were awfully put out when Arthur told you, weren't you?"

"Well, you know, the saying is 'A bad beginning makes a good ending,'" said Ellen. "Since there was only Arthur left to me, I hadn't been calculating on a daughter-in-law to come and take him away."

Madelene felt what lay behind that timid, subtle statement of the case. Her face shadowed. She had been picturing a life, a home, with just Arthur and herself; here was a far different prospect opening up. But Mrs. Ranger was waiting, expectant; she must be answered. "I couldn't take him away from you," Madelene said. "I'd only lose him myself if I tried."

Tears came into Ellen's eyes and her hands clasped in her lap to steady their trembling. "I know how it is," she said. "I'm an old woman, and"—with an appeal for contradiction that went straight to Madelene's heart—"I'm afraid I'd be in the way?"

"In the way!" cried Madelene. "Why, you're the only one that can teach me how to take care of him. He says you've

always taken care of him, and I suppose he's too old now to learn how to look after himself."

"You wouldn't mind coming here to live?" asked Ellen humbly. She hardly dared speak out thus plainly; but she felt that never again would there be such a good chance of success.

It was full a minute before Madelene could trust her voice to make reply, not because she hesitated to commit herself, but because she was moved to the depths of her tender heart by this her first experience of about the most tragic of the every-day tragedies in human life—a lone old woman pleading with a young one for a little corner to sit in and wait for death. "I wish it weren't quite such a grand house," she said at last with a look at the old woman—how old she seemed just then! —a look that was like light. "We're too poor to have the right to make any such start. But, if you'd let me—if you're sure you wouldn't think me an intruder—I'd be glad to come."

"Then that's settled," said Mrs. Ranger, with a deep sigh of relief. But her head and her hands were still trembling from the nervous shock of the suspense, the danger that she would be left childless and alone. "We'll get along once you're used to the idea of having me about. I know my place. I never was a great hand at meddling. You'll hardly know I'm around."

Again Madelene had the choke in her throat, the ache at the heart. "But you wouldn't throw the care of this house on my hands!" she exclaimed in well-pretended dismay. "Oh, no, you've simply got to look after things! Why, I was even counting on your helping me with my practice."

Ellen Ranger thrilled with a delight such as she had not had in many a year—the matchless delight of a new interest. Her mother had been famous throughout those regions in the pioneer days for skill at "yarbs" and at nursing, and had taught her a great deal. But she had had small chance to practice, she and her husband and her children being all and always so healthy. All those years she had had to content herself with thinking and talking of hypothetical cases and with commenting, usually rather severely, upon the conduct of every case in the

town of which she heard. Now, in her old age, just as she was feeling that she had no longer an excuse for being alive, here, into her very house, was coming a career for her, and it the career of which she had always dreamed!

She forgot about the marriage and its problems, and plunged at once into an exposition of her views of medicine—her hostility to the allopaths, with their huge, fierce doses of dreadful poisons that had ruined most of the teeth and stomachs in the town; her disdain of the homeopaths, with their petty pills and their silly notion that the hair of the dog would cure its bite. She was all for the medicine of nature and common sense; and Madelene, able honestly to assent, rose in her esteem by leaps and bounds. Before the end of that conversation Mrs. Ranger was convinced that she had always believed the doctors should be women. "Who understands a woman but a woman? Who understands a child but a woman? And what's a man when he's sick but a child?" She was impatient for the marriage. And when Madelene asked if she'd object to having a small doctor's sign somewhere on the front fence, she looked astounded at the question. "We must do better than that," she said. "I'll have you an office—just two or three rooms—built down by the street so as to save people coming clear up here. That'd lose you many a customer."

"Yes, it might lose us a good many," said Madelene, and you'd never have thought the "us" deliberate.

That capped the climax. Mrs. Ranger was her new daughter's thenceforth. And Madelene went away, if possible happier than when she and Arthur had straightened it all out between themselves the night before. Had she not lifted that fine old woman up from the grave upon which she was wearily lying, waiting for death? Had she not made her happy by giving her something to live for? Something to live for! "She looked years younger immediately," thought Madelene. "That's the secret of happiness—something to live for, something real and useful."

"I never thought you'd find anybody good enough for you,"

said Mrs. Ranger to her son that evening. "But you have. She's got a heart and a head both—and most of the women nowadays ain't got much of either."

And it was that night as Ellen was saying her prayers, that she asked God to forgive her the sin of secret protest she had let live deep in a dark corner of her heart—reproach of Hiram for having cut off their son. "It was for the best," she said. "I see it now."

CHAPTER XX

LORRY'S ROMANCE

HEN Charles Whitney heard Arthur was about to be married, he offered him a place on the office staff of the Ranger-Whitney Company at fifteen hundred a year. "It is less than you deserve on your record," he wrote, "but there is no vacancy just now, and you shall go up rapidly. I take this opportunity to say that I regard your father's will as the finest act of the finest man I ever knew, and that your conduct, since he left us, is a vindication of his wisdom. America has gone stark mad on the subject of money. The day is not far distant when it has got to decide whether property shall rule work or work shall rule property. Your father was a courageous pioneer. All right-thinking men honor him."

This, a fortnight after his return from Europe, from marrying Janet to Aristide, Viscount Brunais. He had yielded to his secret snobbishness—Matilda thought it was her diplomacy—and had given Janet a dowry so extravagant that when old Saint Berthè heard the figures, he took advantage of the fact that only the family lawyer was present to permit a gleam of nature to show through his mask of elegant indifference to the "coarse side of life." Whitney had the American good sense to despise his wife, his daughter, and himself for the transaction. For years furious had been his protestations to his family, to his acquaintances, and to himself against "society," and especially against the incursions of that "worm-eaten titled crowd from the other side." So often had he repeated those protests that certain phrases had become fixedly part of his conversation, to make the most noise when he was violently agitated, as do the

dead leaves of a long-withered but still firmly attached bough. Thus he was regarded in Chicago as an American of the old type; but being human, his strength had not been strong enough to resist the taint in the atmosphere he had breathed ever since he began to be very rich and to keep the company of the pretentious. His originally sound constitution had been gradually undermined, just as "doing like everybody else"—that is, everybody in his set of pirates disguised under merchant flag and with a few deceptive bales of goods piled on deck—had undermined his originally sound business honor.

Arthur answered, thanking him for the offered position, but declining it. "What you say about my work," he wrote, "encourages me to ask a favor. I wish to be transferred from one mechanical department to another until I have made the round. Then, perhaps, I may venture to ask you to renew your offer."

Whitney showed this to Ross. "Now, *there's* the sort of son I'd be proud of!" he exclaimed.

Ross lifted his eyebrows. "Really!" said he. "Why?"

"Because he's a *man*," retorted his father, with obvious intent of satirical contrast. "Because within a year or two he'll know the business from end to end—as his father did—as I do."

"And what good will that do him?" inquired Ross, with fine irony. "You know it isn't in the manufacturing end that the money's made nowadays. We can hire hundreds of good men to manufacture for us. I should say he'd be wiser were he trying to get a *practical* education."

"Practical!"

"Precisely. Studying how to stab competitors in the back and establish monopoly. As a manager, he may some day rise to ten or fifteen thousand a year—unless managers' salaries go down, as it's likely they will. As a financier, he might rise to —to *our* class."

Whitney grunted, the frown of his brows and the smile on his sardonic mouth contradicting each other. He could not but be pleased by the shrewdness of his son's criticism of his own half-sincere, half-hypocritical tribute to virtues that were

on the wane; but at the same time he did not like such frank expression of cynical truth from a son of his. Also, he at the bottom still had some of the squeamishness that was born into him and trained into him in early youth; he did not like to be forced squarely to face the fact that real business had been relegated to the less able or less honest, while the big rewards of riches and respect were for the sly and stealthy. Enforcing what Ross had said, there came into his mind the reflection that he himself had just bribed through the Legislature, for a comparatively trifling sum, a law that would swell his fortune and income within the next five years more than would a lifetime of devotion to business.

He would have been irritated far more deeply had he known that Arthur was as well aware of the change from the old order as was Ross, and that deliberately and on principle he was refusing to adapt himself to the new order, the new conditions of "success." When Arthur's manliness first asserted itself, there was perhaps as much of vanity as of pride in his acceptance of the consequences of Hiram's will. But to an intelligent man any environment, except one of inaction or futile action, soon becomes interesting; the coming of Madelene was all that was needed to raise his interest to enthusiasm. He soon understood his fellow-workers as few of them understood themselves. Every human group, of whatever size or kind, is apt to think its characteristics peculiar to itself, when in fact they are as universal as human nature, and the modifications due to the group's environment are insignificant matters of mere surface. Nationality, trade, class no more affect the oneness of mankind than do the ocean's surface variations of color or weather affect its unchangeable chemistry. Waugh, who had risen from the ranks, Howells, who had begun as shipping clerk, despised those above whom they had risen, regarded as the peculiar weaknesses of the working classes such universal failings as prejudice, short-sightedness, and shirking. They lost no opportunity to show their lack of sympathy with the class from which they had sprung and to which they still belonged in reality, their devotion to the class plutocratic to which they aspired.

Arthur, in losing the narrowness of the class from which he had been ejected, lost all class narrowness. The graduates from the top have the best chance to graduate into the wide, wide world of human brotherhood. By an artificial process—by compulsion, vanity, reason, love—he became what Madelene was by nature. She was one of those rare human beings born with a just and clear sense of proportion. It was thus impossible for her to exaggerate into importance the trivial differences of mental stature. She saw that they were no greater than the differences of men's physical stature, if men be compared with mountains or any other just measure of the vast scale on which the universe is constructed. And so it came naturally to her to appreciate that the vital differences among men are matters of character and usefulness, just as among things they are matters of beauty and use.

Arthur's close friend was now Laurent Tague, a young cooper—huge, deep-chested, tawny, slow of body and swift of mind. They had been friends as boys at school. When Arthur came home from Exeter from his first long vacation, their friendship had been renewed after a fashion, then had ended abruptly in a quarrel and a pitched battle, from which neither had emerged victor, both leaving the battle ground exhausted and anguished by a humiliating sense of defeat. From that time Laurent had been a "damned mucker" to Arthur, Arthur a "stuck-up smart Alec" to Laurent. The renewal of the friendship dated from the accident to Arthur's hand; it rapidly developed as he lost the sense of patronizing Laurent, and as Laurent for his part lost the suspicion that Arthur was secretly patronizing him. Then Arthur discovered that Lorry had, several years before, sent for a catalogue of the University of Michigan, had selected a course leading to the B.S. degree, had bought the necessary text-books, had studied as men work only at that which they love for its own sake and not for any advantage to be got from it. His father, a captain of volunteers in the Civil War, was killed in the Wilderness; his mother was a washerwoman. His father's father—Jean Montague, the first blacksmith of Saint X—had shortened the family name.

In those early, nakedly practical days, long names and difficult names, such as naturally develop among peoples of leisure, were ruthlessly taken to the chopping block by a people among whom a man's name was nothing in itself, was simply a convenience for designating him. Everybody called Jean Montague "Jim Tague," and pronounced the Tague in one syllable; when he finally acquiesced in the sensible, popular decision, from which he could not well appeal, his very children were unaware that they were Montagues.

Arthur told Lorry of his engagement to Madelene an hour after he told his mother—he and Lorry were heading a barrel as they talked. This supreme proof of friendship moved Laurent to give proof of appreciation. That evening he and Arthur took a walk to the top of Reservoir Hill, to see the sun set and the moon rise. It was under the softening and expanding influence of the big, yellow moon upon the hills and valleys and ghostly river that Laurent told his secret—a secret that in the mere telling, and still more in itself, was to have a profound influence upon the persons of this narrative.

"When I was at school," he began, "you may remember I used to carry the washing to and fro for mother."

"Yes," said Arthur. He remembered how he liked to slip away from home and help Lorry with the big baskets.

"Well, one of the places I used to go to was old Preston Wilmot's; they had a little money left in those days and used to hire mother now and then."

"So the Wilmots owe her, too," said Arthur, with a laugh. The universal indebtedness of the most aristocratic family in Saint X was the town joke.

Lorry smiled. "Yes, but she don't know it," he replied. "I used to do all her collecting for her. When the Wilmots quit paying, I paid for 'em—out of money I made at odd jobs. I paid for 'em for over two years. Then, one evening—Estelle Wilmot"—Lorry paused before this name, lingered on it, paused after it—"said to me—she waylaid me at the back gate—I always had to go in and out by the alley way—no wash by the front gate for them! Anyhow, she stopped me and said

—all red and nervous—'You mustn't come for the wash any more.'

"'Why not?' says I. 'Is the family complaining?'

"'No,' says she, 'but we owe you for two years.'

"'What makes you think that?' said I, astonished and pretty badly scared for the minute.

"'I've kept account,' she said. And she was fiery red. 'I keep a list of all we owe, so as to have it when we're able to pay.'"

"What a woman she is!" exclaimed Arthur. "I suppose she's putting by out of the profits of that little millinery store of hers to pay off the family debts. I hear she's doing well."

"A smashing business," replied Lorry, in a tone that made Arthur glance quickly at him. "But, as I was saying, I being a young fool and frightened out of my wits, said to her: 'You don't owe mother a cent, Miss Estelle. It's all been settled—except a few weeks lately. I'm collectin', and I ought to know.'

"I ain't much of a hand at lying, and she saw straight through me. I guess what was going on in her head helped her, for she looked as if she was about to faint. 'It's mighty little for me to do, to get to see you,' I went on. 'It's my only chance. Your people would never let me in at the front gate. And seeing you is the only thing I care about.' Then I set down the washbasket and, being desperate, took courage and looked straight at her. 'And,' said I, 'I've noticed that for the last year you always make a point of being on hand to give me the wash.'"

Somehow a lump came in Arthur's throat just then. He gave his Herculeslike friend a tremendous clap on the knee. "Good for you, Lorry!" he cried. "*That* was the talk!"

"It was," replied Lorry. "Well, she got red again, where she had been white as a dogwood blossom, and she hung her head. 'You don't deny it, do you?' said I. She didn't make any answer. 'It wasn't altogether to ask me how I was getting on with my college course, was it, Miss Estelle?' And she said 'No' so low that I had to guess at it."

Lorry suspended his story. He and Arthur sat looking at the moon. Finally Arthur asked, rather huskily, "Is that the end, Lorry?"

Lorry's keen, indolent face lit up with an absent and tender smile. "That was the end of the beginning," replied he.

Arthur thrilled and resisted a feminine instinct to put his arm round his friend. "I don't know which of you is the luckier," he said.

Lorry laughed. "You're always envying me my good disposition," he went on. "Now, I've given away the secret of it. Who isn't happy when he's got what he wants—heaven without the bother of dying first? I drop into her store two evenings a week to see her. I can't stay long or people would talk. Then I see her now and again—other places. We have to be careful—mighty careful."

"You must have been," said Arthur. "I never heard a hint of this; and if anyone suspected, the whole town would be talking."

"I guess the fact that she's a Wilmot has helped us. Who'd ever suspect a Wilmot of such a thing?"

"Why not?" said Arthur. "She couldn't do better."

Lorry looked amused. "What'd you have said a few months ago, Ranger?"

"But *my* father was a workingman."

"That was a long time ago," Lorry reminded him. "That was when America used to be American. Anyhow, she and I don't care, except about the mother. You know the old lady isn't strong, especially the last year or so. It wouldn't exactly improve her health to know there was anything between her daughter and a washerwoman's son, a plain workingman at that. We—Estelle and I—don't want to be responsible for any harm to her. So—we're waiting."

"But there's the old gentleman, and Arden—*and* Verbena!"

Lorry's cheerfulness was not ruffled by this marshaling of the full and formidable Wilmot array. "It'd be a pleasure to Estelle to give *them* a shock, especially Verbena. Did you ever see Verbena's hands?"

"I don't think so," replied Arthur; "but, of course, I've heard of them."

"Did you know she wouldn't even take hold of a knob to open a door, for fear of stretching them?"

"She *is* a lady, sure."

"Well, Estelle's not, thank God!" exclaimed Lorry. "She says one of her grandmothers was the daughter of a fellow who kept a kind of pawn shop, and that she's a case of atavism."

"But, Lorry," said Arthur, letting his train of thought come to the surface, "this ought to rouse your ambition. You could get anywhere you liked. To win her, I should think you'd exert yourself at the factory as you did at home when you were going through Ann Arbor."

"To win her—perhaps I would," replied Lorry. "But, you see, I've won her. I'm satisfied with my position. I make enough for us two to live on as well as any sensible person'd care to live. I've got four thousand dollars put by, and I'm insured for ten thousand, and mother's got twelve thousand at interest that she saved out of the washing. I like to *live*. They made me assistant foreman once, but I was no good at it. I couldn't 'speed' the men. It seemed to me they got a small enough part of what they earned, no matter how little they worked. Did you ever think, it takes one of us only about a day to make enough barrels to pay his week's wages, and that he has to donate the other five days' work for the privilege of being allowed to live? If I rose I'd be living off those five days of stolen labor. Somehow I don't fancy doing it. So I do my ten hours a day, and have evenings and Sundays for the things I like."

"Doesn't Estelle try to spur you on?"

"She used to, but she soon came round to my point of view. She saw what I meant, and she hasn't, any more than I, the fancy for stealing time from being somebody, to use it in making fools think and say you're somebody, when you ain't."

"It'd be a queer world if everybody were like you."

"It'd be a queer world if everybody were like any particular person," retorted Lorry.

Arthur's mind continually returned to this story, to revolve it, to find some new suggestion as to what was stupid or savage or silly in the present social system, as to what would be the social system of to-morrow, which is to to-day's as to-day's is to yesterday's; for Lorry and Dr. Schulze and Madelene and his own awakened mind had lifted him out of the silly current notion that mankind is never going to grow any more, but will wear its present suit of social clothes forever, will always creep and totter and lisp, will never learn to walk and to talk. He was in the habit of passing Estelle's shop twice each day—early in the morning, when she was opening, again when the day's business was over; and he had often fancied he could see in her evening expression how the tide of trade had gone. Now, he thought he could tell whether it was to be one of Lorry's evenings or not. He understood why she had so eagerly taken up Henrietta Hastings's suggestion, made probably with no idea that anything would come of it—Henrietta was full of schemes, evolved not for action, but simply to pass the time and to cause talk in the town. Estelle's shop became to him vastly different from a mere place for buying and selling; and presently he was looking on the other side, the human side, of all the shops and businesses and material activities, great and small. Just as a knowledge of botany makes every step taken in the country an advance through thronging miracles, so his new knowledge was transforming surroundings he had thought commonplace into a garden of wonders. "How poor and tedious the life I marked out for myself at college was," he was presently thinking, "in comparison with this life of realities!" He saw that Lorry, instead of being without ambitions, was inspired by the highest ambitions. "A good son, a good lover, a good workman," thought Arthur. "What more can a man be, or aspire to be?" Before his mind's eyes there was, clear as light, vivid as life, the master workman—his father. And for the first time Arthur welcomed that vision, felt that he could look into Hiram's grave, kind eyes without flinching and without the slightest inward reservation of blame or reproach.

It was some time before the bearing of the case of Lorry

and Estelle upon the case of Arthur and Madelene occurred to him. Once he saw this he could think of nothing else. He got Lorry's permission to tell Madelene; and when she had the whole story he said, "You see its message to us?"

And Madelene's softly shining eyes showed that she did, even before her lips had the chance to say, "We certainly have no respectable excuse for waiting."

"As soon as mother gets the office done," suggested Arthur.

On the morning after the wedding, at a quarter before seven, Arthur and Madelene came down the drive together to the new little house by the gate. And very handsome and well matched they seemed as they stood before her office and gazed at the sign: "Madelene Ranger, M.D." She unlocked and opened the door; he followed her in. When, a moment later, he reappeared and went swinging down the street to his work, his expression would have made you like him—and envy him. And at the window watching him was Madelene. There were tears in her fine eyes, and her bosom was heaving in a storm of emotion. She was saying, "It almost seems wicked to feel as happy as I do."

CHAPTER XXI

HIRAM'S SON

IN Hiram Ranger's last year the Ranger-Whitney Company made half a million; the first year under the trustees there was a small deficit. Charles Whitney was most apologetic to his fellow trustees who had given him full control because he owned just under half the stock and was the business man of the three. "I've relied wholly on Howells," explained he. "I knew Ranger had the highest opinion of his ability, but evidently he's one of those chaps who are good only as lieutenants. However, there's no excuse for me—none. During the coming year I'll try to make up for my negligence. I'll give the business my personal attention."

But at the end of the second year the books showed that, while the company had never done so much business, there was a loss of half a million; another such year and the surplus would be exhausted. At the trustees' meeting, of the three faces staring gloomily at these ruinous figures the gloomiest was Charles Whitney's. "There can be only one explanation," said he. "The shifting of the centers of production is making it increasingly difficult to manufacture here at a profit."

"Perhaps the railways are discriminating against us," suggested Scarborough.

Whitney smiled slightly. "That's your reform politics," said he. "You fellows never seek the natural causes for things; you at once accuse the financiers."

Scarborough smiled back at him. "But haven't there been instances of rings in control of railways using their power for plants they were interested in and against competing plants?"

"Possibly—to a limited extent," conceded Whitney. "But I hold to the old-fashioned idea. My dear sir, this is a land of opportunity——"

"Still, Whitney," interrupted Dr. Hargrave, "there *may* be something in what Senator Scarborough says."

"Undoubtedly," Whitney hastened to answer. "I only hope there is. Then our problem will be simple. I'll set my lawyers to work at once. If that is the cause"—he struck the table resolutely with his clenched fist—"the scoundrels shall be brought to book!"

His eyes shifted as he lifted them to find Scarborough looking at him. "You have inside connections with the Chicago railway crowd, have you not, Mr. Whitney?" he inquired.

"I think I have," said Whitney, with easy candor. "That's why I feel confident your suggestion has no foundation—beyond your suspicion of all men engaged in large enterprises. It's a wonder you don't suspect me. Indeed, you probably will."

He spoke laughingly. Scarborough's answer was a grave smile.

"My personal loss may save me from you," Whitney went on. "I hesitate to speak of it, but, as you can see, it is large—almost as large as the university's."

"Yes," said Scarborough absently, though his gaze was still fixed on Whitney. "You think you can do nothing?"

"Indeed I do not!" exclaimed Whitney. "I shall begin with the assumption that you are right. And if you are, I'll have those scoundrels in court within a month."

"And then?"

The young senator's expression and tone were calm, but Whitney seemed to find covert hostility in them. "Then—justice!" he replied angrily.

Dr. Hargrave beamed benevolent confidence. "Justice!" he echoed. "Thank God for our courts!"

"But *when*?" said Scarborough. As there was no answer, he went on: "In five—ten—fifteen—perhaps twenty years. The lawyers are in no hurry—a brief case means a small fee.

The judges—they've got their places for life, so there's no reason why they should muss their silk gowns in undignified haste. Besides— It seems to me I've heard somewhere the phrase 'railway judges.'"

Dr. Hargrave looked gentle but strong disapproval. "You are too pessimistic, Hampden," said he.

"The senator should not let the wounds from his political fights gangrene," suggested Whitney, with good-humored raillery.

"Have you nothing but the court remedy to offer?" asked Scarborough, a slight smile on his handsome face, so deceptively youthful.

"That's quite enough," answered Whitney. "In my own affairs I've never appealed to the courts in vain."

"I can believe it," said Scarborough, and Whitney looked as if he had scented sarcasm, though Scarborough was correctly colorless. "But, if you should be unable to discover any grounds for a case against the railways?"

"Then all we can do is to work harder than ever along the old lines—cut down expenses, readjust wages, stop waste." Whitney sneered politely. "But no doubt you have some other plan to propose."

Scarborough continued to look at him with the same faint smile. "I've nothing to suggest—to-day," said he. "The court proceedings will do no harm—you see, Mr. Whitney, I can't get my wicked suspicion of your friends out of my mind. But we must also try something less—less leisurely than courts. I'll think it over."

Whitney laughed rather uncomfortably; and when they adjourned he lingered with Dr. Hargrave. "We must not let ourselves be carried away by our young friend's suspicions," said he to his old friend. "Scarborough is a fine fellow. But he lacks your experience and my knowledge of practical business. And he has been made something of a crank by combating the opposition his extreme views have aroused among conservative people."

"You are mistaken, Whitney," replied the doctor. "Hamp-

den's views are sound. He is misrepresented by the highly placed rascals he has exposed and dislodged. But in these business matters we rely upon you." He linked his arm affectionately in that of the powerful and successful "captain of industry" whom he had known from boyhood. "I know how devoted you are to Tecumseh, and how ably you manage practical affairs; and I have not for a moment lost confidence that you will bring us safely through."

Whitney's face was interesting. There was a certain hangdog look in it, but there was also a suggestion—very covert—of cynical amusement, as of a good player's jeer at a blunder by his opponent. His tone, however, was melancholy, tinged with just resentment, as he said: "Scarborough forgets how my own personal interest is involved. I don't like to lose two hundred and odd thousand a year."

"Scarborough meant nothing, I'm sure," said Hargrave soothingly. "He knows we are all single hearted for the university."

"I don't like to be distrusted," persisted Whitney sadly. Then brightening: "But you and I understand each other, doctor. And we will carry the business through. Every man who tries to do anything in this world must expect to be misunderstood."

"You are mistaken about Scarborough, I know you are," said Hargrave earnestly.

Whitney listened to Hargrave, finally professed to be reassured; but, before he left, a strong doubt of Scarborough's judgment had been implanted by him in the mind of the old doctor. That was easy enough; for, while Hargrave was too acute a man to give his trust impulsively, he gave without reserve when he did give—and he believed in Charles Whitney. The ability absolutely to trust where trust is necessary is as essential to effective character as is the ability to withhold trust until its wisdom has been justified; and exceptions only confirm a rule.

Scarborough, feeling that he had been neglecting his trusteeship, now devoted himself to the Ranger-Whitney Company.

He had long consultations with Howells, and studied the daily and weekly balance sheets which Howells sent him. In the second month after the annual meeting he cabled Dory to come home. The entire foundation upon which Dory was building seemed to be going; Saint X was, therefore, the place for him, not Europe.

"And there you have all I have been able to find out," concluded Scarborough, when he had given Dory the last of the facts and figures. "What do you make of it?"

"There's something wrong—something rotten," replied Dory.

"But where?" inquired Scarborough, who had taken care not to speak or hint his vague doubts of Whitney. "Everything *looks* all right, except the totals on the balance sheets."

"We must talk this over with some one who knows more about the business than either of us." Then he added, as if the idea had just come to him, "Why not call in Arthur—Arthur Ranger?"

Scarborough looked receptive, but not enthusiastic.

"He has been studying this business in the most practical way ever since his father died," urged Dory. "It can't do any harm to consult with him. We don't want to call in outside experts if we can help it."

"If we did we'd have to let Mr. Whitney select them," said Scarborough. And he drew Dory out upon the subject of Arthur and got such complete and intelligent answers that he presently had a wholly new and true idea of the young man whose boyish follies Saint X had not yet forgotten. "Yes, let's give Arthur a chance," he finally said.

Accordingly, they laid the case in its entirety before Arthur, and he took home with him the mass of reports which Scarborough had gathered. Night after night he and Madelene worked at the problem; for both knew that its solution would be his opportunity, *their* opportunity.

It was Madelene who discovered the truth—not by searching the figures, not by any process of surface reasoning, but by that instinct for motive which woman has developed through

her ages of dealing with and in motives only. "They must get a new management," said she; "one that Charles Whitney has no control over."

"Why?"

"Because he's wrecking the business to get hold of it. He wants the whole thing, and he couldn't resist the chance the inexperience and confidence of the other two gave him."

"I see no indication of it," objected Arthur, to draw her out. "On the contrary, wherever he directly controls there's a good showing."

"That's it!" exclaimed Madelene, feeling that she now had her feet on the firm ground of reason on which alone stupid men will discuss practical affairs.

Arthur had lived with Madelene long enough to learn that her mind was indeed as clear as her eyes, that when she looked at anything she saw it as it was, and saw all of it. Like any man who has the right material in him, he needed only the object lesson of her quick dexterity at stripping a problem of its shell of nonessentials. He had become what the ineffective call a pessimist. He had learned the primer lesson of large success—that one must build upon the hard, pessimistic facts of human nature's instability and fate's fondness for mischief, not upon the optimistic clouds of belief that everybody is good and faithful and friendly disposed and everything will "come out all right somehow." The instant Madelene suggested Whitney as the cause, Arthur's judgment echoed approval; but, to get her whole mind as one gives it only in combating opposition, he continued to object. "But suppose," said he, "Whitney insists on selecting the new management? As he's the only one competent, how can they refuse?"

"We must find a way round that," replied Madelene. "It's perfectly plain, isn't it, that there's only one course—an absolutely new management. And how can Mr. Whitney object? If he's not guilty he won't object, because he'll be eager to try the obvious remedy. If he's guilty he won't object—he'll be afraid of being suspected."

"Dory suggested—" began Arthur, and stopped.

"That you be put in as manager?"

"How did *you* know *that*?"

"It's the sensible thing. It's the only thing," answered his wife. "And Dory has the genius of good sense. You ought to go to Scarborough and ask for the place. Take Dory with you."

"That's good advice," said Arthur, heartily.

Madelene laughed. "When a man praises a woman's advice, it means she has told him to do what he had made up his mind to do anyhow."

Next day Scarborough called a meeting of the trustees. Down from Chicago came Whitney—at the greatest personal inconvenience, so he showed his colleagues, but eager to do anything for Tecumseh. Scarborough gave a clear and appalling account of how the Ranger-Whitney Company's prosperity was slipping into the abyss like a caving sand bank, on all sides, apparently under pressure of forces beyond human control. "In view of the facts," said he, in conclusion, "our sole hope is in putting ourselves to one side and giving an entirely new management an entirely free hand."

Whitney had listened to Scarborough's speech with the funereal countenance befitting so melancholy a recital. As Scarborough finished and sank back in his chair, he said, with energy and heartiness, "I agree with you, senator. The lawyers tell me there are as yet no signs of a case against the railways. Besides, the trouble seems to be, as I feared, deeper than this possible rebating. Jenkins—one of my best men—I sent him down to help Howells out—he's clearly an utter failure—utter! And I am getting old. The new conditions of business life call for young men with open minds."

"No, no!" protested Dr. Hargrave. "I will not consent to any change that takes your hand off the lever, my friend. These are stormy times in our industrial world, and we need the wise, experienced pilot."

Scarborough had feared this; but he and Dory, forced to

choose between taking him into their confidence and boldly challenging the man in whom he believed implicitly, had chosen the far safer course. "While Mr. Whitney must appreciate your eulogy, doctor," said he, suave yet with a certain iciness, "I think he will insist upon the trial of the only plan that offers. In our plight we must not shrink from desperate remedies—even a remedy as desperate as eliminating the one man who understands the business from end to end." This last with slight emphasis and a steady look at Whitney.

Whitney reddened. "We need not waste words," said he, in his bluff, sharp voice. "The senator and I are in accord, and we are the majority."

"At least, Mr. Whitney," said the doctor, "you must suggest the new man. You know the business world. We don't."

A long pause; then from Whitney: "Why not try young Ranger?"

Scarborough looked at him in frank amazement. By what process of infernal telepathy had he found out? Or was there some deep reason why Arthur would be the best possible man for his purpose, if his purpose was indeed malign? Was Arthur his tool? Or was Arthur subtly making tools of both Whitney and himself?

Dr. Hargrave was dumfounded. When he recovered himself sufficiently to speak, it was to say, "Why, he's a mere boy, Whitney—not yet thirty. He has had no experience!"

"Inexperience seems to be what we need," replied Whitney, eyes twinkling sneeringly at Scarborough. "We have tried experience, and it is a disastrous failure."

Scarborough was still reflecting.

"True," pursued Whitney, "the young man would also have the motive of self-interest to keep him from making a success."

"How is that?" inquired Scarborough.

"Under the will," Whitney reminded him, "he can buy back the property at its market value. Obviously, the less the property is worth, the better for him."

Scarborough was staggered. Was Arthur crafty as well as able? With the human conscience ever eager to prove that what is personally advantageous is also right, how easy for a man in his circumstances to convince himself that any course would be justifiable in upsetting the "injustice" of Hiram Ranger's will.

"However," continued Whitney, "I've no doubt he's as honest as his father—and I couldn't say more than that. The only question is whether we can risk giving him the chance to show what there is in him."

Dr. Hargrave was looking dazedly from one of his colleagues to the other, as if he thought his mind were playing him a trick. "It is impossible—preposterous!" he exclaimed.

"A man has to make a beginning," said Whitney. "How can he show what there is in him unless he gets a chance? It seems to me, doctor, we owe it to Hiram to do this for the boy. We can keep an eye and a hand on him. What do you think, senator?"

Scarborough had won at every stage of his career, not merely because he had convictions and the courage of them, but chiefly because he had the courage to carry through the plans he laid in trying to make his convictions effective. He had come there, fixed that Arthur was the man for the place; why throw up his hand because Whitney was playing into it? Nothing had occurred to change his opinion of Arthur. "Let us try Arthur Ranger," he now said. "But let us give him a free hand."

He was watching Whitney's face; he saw it change expression—a slight frown. "I advise against the free hand," said Whitney.

"I *protest* against it!" cried Dr. Hargrave. "I protest against even considering this inexperienced boy for such a responsibility."

Scarborough addressed himself to Whitney. "If we do not give our new manager, whoever he may be, a free hand, and if he should fail, how shall we know whether the fault is his or—yours?"

At the direct "yours" Scarborough thought Whitney winced; but his reply was bland and frank enough. He turned to Dr. Hargrave. "The senator is right," said he. "I shall vote with him."

"Then it is settled," said Scarborough. "Ranger is to have absolute charge."

Dr. Hargrave was now showing every sign of his great age; the anguish of imminent despair was in his deep-set eyes and in his broken, trembling voice as he cried: "Gentlemen, this is madness! Charles, I implore you, do not take such precipitate action in so vital a matter! Let us talk it over — think it over. The life of the university is at stake!"

It was evident that the finality in the tones and in the faces of his colleagues had daunted him; but with a tremendous effort he put down the weakness of age and turned fiercely upon Whitney to shame him from indorsing Scarborough's suicidal policy. But Whitney, with intent of brutality, took out his watch. "I have just time to catch my train," said he, indifferently; "I can only use my best judgment, doctor. Sorry to have to disagree with you, but Senator Scarborough has convinced me." And having thus placed upon Scarborough the entire responsibility for the event of the experiment, he shook hands with his colleagues and hurried out to his waiting carriage.

Dr. Hargrave dropped into a chair and stared into vacancy. In all those long, long years of incessant struggle against heart-breaking obstacles he had never lost courage or faith. But this blow at the very life of the university and from its friends! He could not even lift himself enough to look to his God; it seemed to him that God had gone on a far journey. Scarborough, watching him, was profoundly moved. "If at the end of three months you wish Ranger to resign," said he, "I shall see to it that he does resign. Believe me, doctor, I have not taken this course without considering all the possibilities, so far as I could foresee them."

The old president, impressed by his peculiar tone, looked

up quickly. "There is something in this that I don't understand," said he, searching Scarborough's face.

Scarborough was tempted to explain. But the consequences, should he fail to convince Hargrave, compelled him to withhold. "I hope, indeed I feel sure, you will be astonished in our young friend," said he, instead. "I have been talking with him a good deal lately, and I am struck by the strong resemblance to his father. It is more than mere physical likeness."

With a sternness he could have shown only where principle was at stake, the old man said: "But I must not conceal from you, senator, that I have the gravest doubts and fears You have alienated the university's best friend—rich, powerful, able, and, until you exasperated him, devoted to its interests. I regard you as having—unintentionally, and no doubt for good motives—betrayed the solemn trust Hiram Ranger reposed in you." He was standing at his full height, with his piercing eyes fixed upon his young colleague's.

All the color left Scarborough's face. "Betrayed is a strong word," he said.

"A strong word, senator," answered Dr. Hargrave, "and used deliberately. I wish you good day, sir."

Hargrave was one of those few men who are respected without any reservation, and whose respect is, therefore, not given up without a sense of heavy loss. But to explain would be to risk rousing in him an even deeper anger—anger on account of his friend Whitney; so, without another word, Scarborough bowed and went. "Either he will be apologizing to me at the end of three months," said he to himself, "or I shall be apologizing to Whitney and shall owe Tecumseh a large sum of money."

Both Madelene and Arthur had that instinct for comfort and luxury which is an even larger factor in advancement than either energy or intelligence. The idea that clothing means something more than warmth, food something more than fod-

der, a house something more than shelter, is the beginning of progress; the measure of a civilized man or woman is the measure of his or her passion for and understanding of the art of living.

Madelene, by that right instinct which was perhaps the finest part of her sane and strong character, knew what comfort really means, knew the difference between luxury and the showy vulgarity of tawdriness or expensiveness; and she rapidly corrected, or, rather, restored, Arthur's good taste, which had been vitiated by his associations with fashionable people, whose standards are necessarily always poor. She was devoted to her profession as a science; but she did not neglect the vital material considerations. She had too much self-respect to become careless about her complexion or figure, about dress or personal habits, even if she had not had such shrewd insight into what makes a husband remain a lover, a wife a mistress. She had none of those self-complacent delusions which lure vain women on in slothfulness until Love vacates his neglected temple. And in large part, no doubt, Arthur's appearance—none of the stains and patches of the usual workingman, and this though he worked hard at manual labor and in a shop—was due to her influence of example; he, living with such a woman, would have been ashamed not to keep "up to the mark." Also her influence over old Mrs. Ranger became absolute; and swiftly yet imperceptibly the house, which had so distressed Adelaide, was transformed, not into the exhibit of fashionable ostentation which had once been Adelaide's and Arthur's ideal, but into a house of comfort and beauty, with colors harmonizing, the look of newness gone from the "best rooms," and finally the "best rooms" themselves abolished. And Ellen thought herself chiefly responsible for the change. "I'm gradually getting things just about as I want 'em," said she. "It does take a long time to do anything in this world!" Also she believed, and a boundless delight it was to her, that she was the cause of Madelene's professional success. Everyone talked of the way Madelene was getting on, and wondered at her luck. "She deserves it, though," said they, "for she can all but raise

the dead." In fact, the secret was simple enough. She had been taught by her father to despise drugs and to compel dieting and exercise. She had the tact which he lacked; she made the allowances for human nature's ignorance and superstition which he refused to make; she lessened the hardship of taking her common-sense prescriptions by veiling them in medical hocus-pocus—a compromise of the disagreeable truth which her father had always inveighed against as both immoral and unwholesome.

Within six months after her marriage she was earning as much as her husband; and her fame was spreading so rapidly that not only women but also men, and men with a contempt for the "inferior mentality of the female," were coming to her from all sides. "You'll soon have a huge income," said Arthur. "Why, you'll be rich, you are so grasping."

"Indeed I am," replied she. "The way to teach people to strive for high wages and to learn thrift is to make them pay full value for what they get. I don't propose to encourage dishonesty or idleness. Besides, we'll need the money."

Arthur had none of that mean envy which can endure the prosperity of strangers only; he would not even have been able to be jealous of his wife's getting on better than did he. But, if he had been so disposed, he would have found it hard to indulge such feelings because of Madelene. She had put their married life on the right basis. She made him feel, with a certainty which no morbid imagining could have shaken, that she loved and respected him for qualities which could not be measured by any of the world's standards of success. He knew that in her eyes he was already an arrived success, that she was absolutely indifferent whether others ever recognized it or not. Only those who realize how powerful is the influence of intimate association will appreciate what an effect living with Madelene had upon Arthur's character—in withering the ugly in it, in developing its quality, and in directing its strength.

When Scarborough gave Arthur his "chance," Madelene took it as the matter of course. "I'm sorry it has come so

soon," said she, "and in just this way. But it couldn't have been delayed long. With so much to be done and so few able or willing to do it, the world can't wait long enough for a man really to ripen. It's lucky that you inherit from your father so many important things that most men have to spend their lives in learning."

"Do you think so?" said he, brightening; for, with the "chance" secure, he was now much depressed by the difficulties which he had been resurveying from the inside point of view.

"You understand how to manage men," she replied, "and you understand business."

"But, unfortunately, this isn't business."

He was right. The problem of business is, in its two main factors, perfectly simple—to make a wanted article, and to put it where those who want it can buy. But this was not Arthur Ranger's problem, nor is it the problem of most business men in our time. Between maker and customer, nowadays, lie the brigands who control the railways—that is, the highways; and they with equal facility use or defy the law, according to their needs. When Arthur went a-buying grain or stave timber, he and those with whom he was trading had to placate the brigands before they could trade; when he went a-selling flour, he had to fight his way to the markets through the brigands. It was the battle which causes more than ninety out of every hundred in independent business to fail—and of the remaining ten, how many succeed only because they either escaped the notice of the brigands or compromised with them?

"I wish you luck," said Jenkins, when, at the end of two weeks of his tutelage, Arthur told him he would try it alone.

Arthur laughed. "No, you don't, Jenkins," replied he, with good-humored bluntness. "But I'm going to have it, all the same."

Discriminating prices and freight rates against his grain, discriminating freight rates against his flour; the courts either powerless to aid him or under the rule of bandits; and, on the top of all, a strike within two weeks after Jenkins left—such

was the situation. Arthur thought it hopeless; but he did not lose courage nor his front of serenity, even when alone with Madelene. Each was careful not to tempt the malice of fate by concealments; each was careful also not to annoy the other with unnecessary disagreeable recitals. If he could have seen where good advice could possibly help him, he would have laid all his troubles before her; but it seemed to him that to ask her advice would be as if she were to ask him to tell her how to put life into a corpse. He imagined that she was deceived by his silence about the details of his affairs because she gave no sign, did not even ask questions beyond generalities. She, however, was always watching his handsome face with its fascinating evidences of power inwardly developing; and, as it was her habit to get valuable information as to what was going on inside her fellow-beings from a close study of surface appearances, the growing gauntness of his features, the coming out of the lines of sternness, did not escape her, made her heart throb with pride even as it ached with sympathy and anxiety. At last she decided for speech.

He was sitting in their dressing room, smoking his last cigarette as he watched her braid her wonderful hair for the night. She, observing him in the glass, saw that he was looking at her with that yearning for sympathy which is always at its strongest in a man in the mood that was his at sight of those waves and showers of soft black hair on the pallid whiteness of her shoulders. Before he realized what she was about she was in his lap, her arms round his neck, his face pillowed against her cheek and her hair. "What is it, little boy?" she murmured, with that mingling of the mistress and the mother which every woman who ever loved feels for and, at certain times, shows the man she loves.

He laughed. "Business—business," said he. "But let's not talk about it. The important thing is that I have *you*. The rest is—smoke!" And he blew out a great cloud of it and threw the cigarette through the open window.

"Tell me," she said; "I've been waiting for you to speak, and I can't wait any longer."

"I couldn't—just now. It doesn't at all fit in with my thoughts." And he kissed her.

She moved to rise. "Then I'll go back to the dressing table. Perhaps you'll be able to tell me with the width of the room between us."

He drew her head against his again. "Very well—if I must, I will. But you know all about it. For some mysterious reason, somebody—you say it's Whitney, and probably it is—won't let me buy grain or anything else as cheaply as others buy it. And for the same mysterious reason, somebody, probably Whitney again, won't let me get to market without paying a heavier toll than our competitors pay. And now for some mysterious reason somebody, probably Whitney again, has sent labor organizers from Chicago among the men and has induced them to make impossible demands and to walk out without warning."

"And you think there's nothing to do but walk out, too," said Madelene.

"Or wait until I'm put out."

His tone made those words mean that his desperate situation had roused his combativeness, that he would not give up. Her blood beat faster and her eyes shone. "You'll win," she said, with the quiet confidence which strengthens when it comes from a person whose judgment one has tested and found good. And he believed in her as absolutely as she believed in him.

"I've been tempted to resign," he went on. "If I don't everybody'll say I'm a failure when the crash comes. But—Madelene, there's something in me that simply won't let me quit."

"There is," replied she; "it's your father."

"Anyhow, *you* are the only public opinion for me."

"You'll win," repeated Madelene. "I've been thinking over that whole business. If I were you, Arthur"—she was sitting up so that she could look at him and make her words more impressive—"I'd dismiss strike and freight rates and the mill, and I'd put my whole mind on Whitney. There's a weak

spot somewhere in his armor. There always is in a scoundrel's."

Arthur reflected. Presently he drew her head down against his; it seemed to her that she could feel his brain at work, and soon she knew from the change in the clasp of his arms about her that that keen, quick mind of his was serving him well. "What a joy it is to a woman," she thought, "to know that she can trust the man she loves—trust him absolutely, always, and in every way." And she fell asleep after awhile, lulled by the rhythmic beat of his pulse, so steady, so strong, giving her such a restful sense of security. She did not awaken until he was gently laying her in the bed.

"You have found it?" said she, reading the news in the altered expression of his face.

"I hope so," replied he.

She saw that he did not wish to discuss. So she said, "I knew you would," and went contentedly back into sleep again.

Next day he carefully read the company's articles of incorporation to make sure that they contained no obstacle to his plan. Then he went to Scarborough, and together they went to Judge Torrey. Three days later there was a special meeting of the board of directors; the president, Charles Whitney, was unable to attend, but his Monday morning mail contained this extract from the minutes:

"Mr. Ranger offered a resolution that an assessment of two thousand dollars be at once laid upon each share of the capital stock, the proceeds to be expended by the superintendent in betterments. Seconded by Mr. Scarborough. Unanimously passed."

Whitney reread this very carefully. He laid the letter down and stared at it. Two thousand dollars a share meant that he, owner of four hundred and eighty-seven shares, would have to pay in cash nine hundred and seventy-four thousand dollars. He ordered his private car attached to the noon express, and at five o'clock he was in Scarborough's library.

"What is the meaning of this assessment?" he demanded, as Scarborough entered.

"Mr. Ranger explained the situation to us," replied Scarborough. "He showed us we had to choose between ruin and a complete reorganization with big improvements and extensions."

"Lunacy, sheer lunacy!" cried Whitney. "A meeting of the board must be called and the resolution rescinded."

Scarborough simply looked at him, a smile in his eyes.

"I never heard of such an outrage! You ask me to pay an assessment of nearly a million dollars on stock that is worthless."

"And," replied Scarborough, "at the end of the year we expect to levy another assessment of a thousand a share."

Whitney had been tramping stormily up and down the room. As Scarborough uttered those last words he halted. He eyed his tranquil fellow-trustee, then seated himself, and said, with not a trace of his recent fury: "You must know, Scarborough, the mills have no future. I hadn't the heart to say so before Dr. Hargrave. But I supposed you were reading the signs right. The plain truth is, this is no longer a good location for the flour industry."

Scarborough waited before replying; when he did speak his tones were deliberate and suggestive of strong emotion well under control. "True," said he, "not just at present. But Judge Beverwick, your friend and silent partner who sits on the federal bench in this district, is at the point of death. I shall see to it that his successor is a man with a less intense prejudice against justice. Thus we may be able to convince some of your friends in control of the railways that Saint X is as good a place for mills as any in the country."

Whitney grunted. His face was inscrutable. He paced the length of the room twice; he stood at the window gazing out at the arbors, at the bees buzzing contentedly, at the flies darting across the sifting sunbeams. "Beautiful place, this," said he at last; "very homelike. No wonder you're a happy man." A pause. "As to the other matter, I'll see. No

doubt I can stop this through the courts, if you push me to it."

"Not without giving us a chance to explain," replied Scarborough; "and the higher courts may agree with us that we ought to defend the university's rights against your railway friends and your 'labor' men whom you sent down here to cause the strike."

"Rubbish!" said Whitney; and he laughed. "Rubbish!" he repeated. "It's not a matter either for argument or for anger." He took his hat, made a slight ironic bow, and was gone.

He spent the next morning with Arthur, discussing the main phases of the business, with little said by either about the vast new project. They lunched together in the car, which was on a siding before the offices, ready to join the early afternoon express. Arthur was on his guard against Whitney, but he could not resist the charm of the financier's manner and conversation. Like all men of force, Whitney had great magnetism, and his conversation was frank to apparent indiscretion, a most plausible presentation of the cynical philosophy of practical life as it is lived by men of bold and generous nature.

"That assessment scheme was yours, wasn't it?" he said, when he and Arthur had got on terms of intimacy.

"The first suggestion came from me," admitted Arthur.

"A great stroke," said Whitney. "You will arrive, young man. I thought it was your doing, because it reminded me of your father. I never knew a more direct man than he, yet he was without an equal at flanking movements. What a pity his mind went before he died! My first impulse was to admire his will. But, now that I've come to know you, I see that if he had lived to get acquainted with you he'd have made a very different disposition of the family property. As it is, it's bound to go to pieces. No board ever managed anything successfully. It's always a man—one man. In this case it ought to be you. But the time will come—soon, probably—when your view will conflict with that of the majority of the board. Then out you'll go; and your years of intelligent labor will be destroyed."

It was plain in Arthur's face that this common-sense statement of the case produced instant and strong effect. He merely said: "Well, one must take that risk."

"Not necessarily," replied Whitney; he was talking in the most careless, impersonal way. "A man of your sort, with the strength and the ability you inherit, and with the power that they give you to play an important part in the world, doesn't let things drift to ruin. I intend, ultimately, to give my share of the Ranger-Whitney Company to Tecumseh—I'm telling you this in confidence."

Arthur glanced quickly at the great financier, suspicion and wonder in his eyes.

"But I want it to be a value when I give it," continued Whitney; "not the worse than worthless paper it threatens to become. Scarborough and Dr. Hargrave are splendid men. No one honors them more highly than I do. But they are not business men. And who will be their successors? Probably men even less practical."

Arthur, keen-witted but young, acute but youthfully ready to attribute the generous motive rather than the sinister, felt that he was getting a new light on Whitney's character. Perhaps Whitney wasn't so unworthy, after all. Perhaps, in trying to wreck the business and so get hold of it, he had been carrying out a really noble purpose, in the unscrupulous way characteristic of the leaders of the world of commerce and finance. To Whitney he said: "I haven't given any thought to these matters." With a good-natured laugh of raillery: "You have kept me too busy."

Whitney smiled—an admission that yet did not commit him. "When you've lived a while longer, Arthur," said he, "you'll not be so swift and harsh in your judgments of men who have to lay the far-sighted plans and have to deal with mankind as it is, not as it ought to be. However, by that time the Ranger-Whitney Company will be wiped out. It's a pity. If only there were some way of getting the control definitely in your hands—where your father would have put it if he had lived. It's a shame to permit his life work and

his plans for the university to be demolished. In your place I'd not permit it."

Arthur slowly flushed. Without looking at Whitney, he said: "I don't see how I could prevent it."

Whitney studied his flushed face, his lowered eyes, reflected carefully on the longing note in the voice in which he had made that statement, a note that changed it to a question. "Control could be got only by ownership," explained he. "If I were sure you were working with a definite, practical purpose really to secure the future of the company, I'd go heartily into your assessment plan. In fact, I'd—" Whitney was feeling his way. The change in Arthur's expression, the sudden tightening of the lips, warned him that he was about to go too far, that he had sowed as much seed as it was wise to sow at that time. He dropped the subject abruptly, saying: "But I've got to go up to the bank before train time. I'm glad we've had this little talk. Something of value may grow out of it. Think it over, and if any new ideas come to you run up to Chicago and see me."

Arthur did indeed think it over, every moment of that afternoon; and before going home he took a long walk alone. He saw that Charles Whitney had proposed a secret partnership, in which he was to play Whitney's game and, in exchange, was to get control of the Ranger-Whitney Company. And what Whitney had said about the folly of board managements, about the insecurity of his own position, was undeniably true; and the sacrifice of the "smaller morality" for the "larger good" would be merely doing what the biographies of the world's men of achievement revealed them as doing again and again. Further, once in control, once free to put into action the plans for a truly vast concern, of which he had so often dreamed, he could give Tecumseh a far larger income than it had ever hoped to have through his father's gift, and also could himself be rich and powerful. To the men who have operated with success and worldly acclaim under the code of the "larger good," the men who have aggrandized themselves at the expense of personal honor and the rights of others and the

progress of the race, the first, the crucial temptation to sacrifice "smaller morality" and "short-sighted scruples" has always come in some such form as it here presented itself to Arthur Ranger. The Napoleons begin as defenders of rational freedom against the insane license of the mob; the Rockefellers begin as cheapeners of a necessity of life to the straitened millions of their fellow-beings.

If Arthur had been weak, he would have put aside the temptation through fear of the consequences of failure. If he had been ignorant, he would have put it aside through superstition. Being neither weak nor ignorant, and having a human passion for wealth and power and a willingness to get them if he could do it without sacrifice of self-respect, he sat calmly down with the temptation and listened to it and debated with it. He was silent all through dinner; and after dinner, when he and Madelene were in their sitting room upstairs, she reading, he sat with his eyes upon her, and continued to think.

All at once he gave a curious laugh, went to the writing table and wrote a few moments. Then he brought the letter to her. "Read that," said he, standing behind her, his hands on her shoulders and an expression in his face that made his resemblance to Hiram startling.

She read:

"My dear Mr. Whitney: I've been 'thinking it over' as you suggested. I've decided to plug along in the old way, between the old landmarks. Let me add that, if you should offer to give your stock to Tecumseh now, I'd have to do my utmost to persuade the trustees not to take it until the company was once more secure. You see, I feel it is absolutely necessary that you have a large pecuniary interest in the success of our plans."

When Madelene had read she turned in the chair until she was looking up at him. "Well?" she inquired. "What does it mean?"

He told her. "And," he concluded, "I wish I could be a great man, but I can't. There's something small in me that

won't permit it. No doubt Franklin was right when he said life was a tunnel and one had to stoop, and even occasionally to crawl, in order to get through it successfully. Now—if I hadn't married you——"

"Always blaming me," she said, tenderly. "But even if you hadn't married me, I suspect that sooner or later you'd have decided for being a large man in a valley rather than a very small imitation man on a mountain." Then, after a moment's thought, and with sudden radiance: "But a man as big as you are wouldn't be let stay in the valley, no matter how hard he tried."

He laughed. "I've no objection to the mountain top," said he. "But I see that, if I get there, it'll have to be in my own way. Let's go out and mail the letter."

And they went down the drive together to the post box, and, strolling back, sat under the trees in the moonlight until nearly midnight, feeling as if they had only just begun life together—and had begun it right.

When Charles Whitney had read the letter he tore it up, saying half-aloud and contemptuously, "I was afraid there was too big a streak of fool in him." Then, with a shrug: "What's the use of wasting time on that little game—especially as I'd probably have left the university the whole business in my will." He wrote Scarborough, proposing that they delay the assessment until he had a chance to look further into the railway situation. "I begin to understand the troubles down there, now that I've taken time to think them over. I feel I can guarantee that no assessment will be necessary."

And when the railways had mysteriously and abruptly ceased to misbehave, and the strike had suddenly fizzled out, he offered his stock to the university as a gift. "I shall see to it," he wrote, "that the company is not molested again, but is helped in every way." Arthur was for holding off, but Scarborough said, "No. He will keep his word." And Scarborough was right in regarding the matter as settled and ac-

ceptance of the splendid gift as safe. Whitney had his own code of honesty, of honor. It was not square dealing, but doing exactly what he specifically engaged to do. He would have stolen anything he could—anything he regarded as worth his while. On the other hand, he would have sacrificed nearly all, if not all, his fortune, to live up to the letter of his given word. This, though no court would have enforced the agreement he had made, though there was no written record of it, no witness other than himself, the other party, and the Almighty —for Charles Whitney believed in an Almighty God and an old-fashioned hell and a Day of Judgment. He conducted his religious bookkeeping precisely as he conducted his business bookkeeping, and was confident that he could escape hell as he had escaped the penitentiary.

CHAPTER XXII

VILLA D'ORSAY

ADELAIDE did not reach home until the troubles with and through Charles Whitney were settled, and Arthur and Dory were deep in carrying out the plans to make the mills and factories part of the university and not merely its property. When Scarborough's urgent cable came, Dory found that all the steamers were full. Adelaide could go with him only by taking a berth in a room with three women in the bottom of the ship. "Impossible accommodations," thought he, "for so luxurious a person and so poor a sailor"; and he did not tell her that this berth could be had. "You'll have to wait a week or so," said he. "As you can't well stay on here alone, why not accept Mrs. Whitney's invitation to join her?"

Adelaide disliked Mrs. Whitney, but there seemed to be no alternative. Mrs. Whitney was at Paris, on the way to America after the wedding and a severe cure at Aix and an aftercure in Switzerland. She had come for the finishing touches of rejuvenation—to get her hair redone and to go through her biennial agony of having Auguste, beauty specialist to the royalty, nobility and fashion, and demimonde, of three continents, burn off her outer skin that nature might replace it with one new and fresh and unwrinkled. She was heavily veiled as she and Adelaide traveled down to Cherbourg to the steamer. As soon as she got aboard she retired to her room and remained hidden there during the voyage, seen only by her maid, her face covered day and night with Auguste's marvelous skin-coaxing mask. Adelaide did not see her again until the morning of the last day, when she appeared on deck dressed beautifully and

youthfully for the shore, her skin as fair and smooth as a girl's, and looking like an elder sister of Adelaide's—at a distance.

She paused in New York; Adelaide hastened to Saint X, though she was looking forward uneasily to her arrival because she feared she would have to live at the old Hargrave house in University Avenue. Miss Skeffington ruled there, and she knew Miss Skeffington—one of those old-fashioned old maids whose rigid ideas of morality extend to the ordering of personal habits in minutest detail. Under her military sway everyone had to rise for breakfast at seven sharp, had to dine exactly at noon, sup when the clock struck the half hour after five. Ingress and egress for members of the family was by the side door only, the front door being reserved for company. For company also was the parlor, and for company the front stairs with their brilliant carpet, new, though laid for the first time nearly a quarter of a century before; for company also was the best room in the house, which ought to have been attractive, but was a little damp from being shut up so much, and was the cause of many a cold to guests. "I simply can't stand it to live by the striking of clocks!" thought Adelaide. "I must do something! But what?"

Her uneasiness proved unnecessary, however. Dory disappointed his aunt, of a new and interestingly difficult spirit to subdue, by taking rooms at the Hendricks Hotel until they should find a place of their own. Mrs. Ranger asked them to live with her; but Adelaide shrank from putting herself in a position where her mother and Arthur could, and her sister-in-law undoubtedly would, "know too much about our private affairs." Mrs. Ranger did not insist. She would not admit it to herself, but, while she worshiped Del and thought her even more beautiful than she was, and just about perfection in every way, still Madelene was more satisfactory for daily companionship. Also, Ellen doubted whether two such positive natures as Madelene's and Adelaide's would be harmonious under the same roof. "What's more," she reflected, "there may be a baby—babies."

Within a fortnight of Del's return, and before she and Dory

had got quite used to each other again, she fixed on an abode. "Mrs. Dorsey was here this afternoon," said she, with enthusiasm which, to Dory's acute perceptions, seemed slightly exaggerated, in fact, forced, "and offered us her house for a year, just to have somebody in it whom she could trust to look after things. You know she's taking her daughter abroad to finish. It was too good a chance to let pass; so I accepted at once."

Dory turned away abruptly. With slow deliberation he took a cigarette from his case, lighted it, watched the smoke drift out at the open window. She was observing him, though she seemed not to be. And his expression made her just a little afraid. Unlike most men who lead purely intellectual lives, he had not the slightest suggestion of sexlessness; on the contrary, he seemed as strong, as positive physically, as the look of his forehead and eyes showed him to be mentally. And now that he had learned to dress with greater care, out of deference to her, she could find nothing about him to help her in protecting herself by criticising him.

"Do you think, Del," said he, "that we'll be able to live in that big place on eighteen hundred a year?"

It wasn't as easy for him thus to remind her of their limited means as it theoretically should have been. Del was distinctly an expensive-looking luxury. That dress of hers, pale green, with hat and everything to match or in harmony, was a "simple thing," but the best dressmaker in the Rue de la Paix had spent a great deal of his costly time in producing that effect of simplicity. Throughout, she had the cleanness, the freshness, the freedom from affectations which Dory had learned could be got only by large expenditure. Nor would he have had her any different. He wanted just the settings she chose for her fair, fine beauty. The only change he would have asked would have been in the expression of those violet eyes of hers when they looked at him.

"You wish I hadn't done it!" she exclaimed. And if he had not glanced away so quickly he would have seen that she was ready to retreat.

"Well, it's not exactly the start I'd been thinking of," replied he, reluctantly but tentatively.

It is not in human nature to refuse to press an offered advantage. Said Del: "Can't we close up most of the house—use only five or six rooms on the ground floor? And Mrs. Dorsey's gardener and his helpers will be there. All we have to do is to see that they've not neglected the grounds." She was once more all belief and enthusiasm. "It seemed to me, taking that place was most economical, and so comfortable. Really, Dory, I didn't accept without thinking."

Dory was debating with himself: To take that house—it was one of those trifles that are anything but trifles—like the slight but crucial motion at the crossroads in choosing the road to the left instead of the road to the right. Not to take the house—Del would feel humiliated, reasoned he, would think him unreasonably small, would chafe under the restraint their limited means put upon them, whereas, if he left the question of living on their income entirely to her good sense, she would not care about the deprivations, would regard them as self-imposed.

"Of course, if you don't like it, Dory," she now said, "I suppose Mrs. Dorsey will let me off. But I'm sure you'd be delighted, once we got settled. The house is so attractive—at least, I think I can make it attractive by packing away her showy stuff and rearranging the furniture. And the grounds—Dory, I don't see how you can object!"

Dory gave a shrug and a smile. "Well, go ahead. We'll scramble through somehow." He shook his head at her in good-humored warning. "Only, please don't forget what's coming at the end of your brief year of grandeur."

Adelaide checked the reply that was all but out. She hastily reflected that it might not be wise to let him know, just then, that Mrs. Dorsey had said they could have the house for two years, probably for three, perhaps for five. Instead, she said, "It isn't the expense, after all, that disturbs you, is it?"

He smiled confession. "No."

"I know it's snobbish of me to long for finery so much that I'm even willing to live in another person's and show off in it," she sighed. "But—I'm learning gradually."

He colored. Unconsciously she had put into her tone—and this not for the first time, by any means—a suggestion that there wasn't the slightest danger of his wearying of waiting, that she could safely take her time in getting round to sensible ideas and to falling in love with him. His eyes had the look of the veiled amusement that deliberately shows through, as he said, "That's good. I'll try to be patient."

It was her turn to color. But, elbowing instinctive resentment, came uneasiness. His love seemed to her of the sort that flowers in the romances—the love that endures all, asks nothing, lives forever upon its own unfed fire. As is so often the case with women whose charms move men to extravagance of speech and emotion, it was a great satisfaction to her, to her vanity, to feel that she had inspired this wonderful immortal flame; obviously, to feed such a flame by giving love for love would reduce it to the commonplace. All women start with these exaggerated notions of the value of being loved; few of them ever realize and rouse themselves, or are aroused, from their vanity to the truth that the value is all the other way. Adelaide was only the natural woman in blindly fancying that Dory was the one to be commiserated, in not seeing that she herself was a greater loser than he, that to return his love would not be a concession but an acquisition. Most men are content to love, to compel women to receive their love; they prefer the passive, the receptive attitude in the woman, and are even bored by being actively loved in return; for love is exacting, and the male is impatient of exaction. Adelaide did not understand just this broad but subtle difference between Dory and "most men"—that he would feel that he was violating her were he to sweep her away in the arms of his impetuous released passion, as he knew he could. He felt that such a yielding was, after all, like the inert obedience of the leaf to the storm wind—that what he could compel, what women call love, would be as utterly without substance as an image in a mirror, indeed, would be a

mere passive reflection of his own love—all most men want, but worthless to him.

Could it be that Dory's love had become—no, not less, but less ardent? She saw that he was deep in thought—about her, she assumed, with an unconscious vanity which would have excited the mockery of many who have more vanity than had she, and perhaps with less excuse. In fact, he was not thinking of her; having the ability to turn his mind completely where he willed—the quality of all strong men, and the one that often makes the weak-willed think them hard—he was revolving the vast and inspiring plans Arthur and he had just got into practical form—plans for new factories and mills such as a university, professing to be in the forefront of progress need not be ashamed to own or to offer to its students as workshops. All that science has bestowed in the way of making labor and its surroundings clean and comfortable, healthful and attractive, was to be provided; all that the ignorance and the short-sighted greediness of employers, bent only on immediate profits and keeping their philanthropy for the smug penuriousness and degrading stupidity of charity, deny to their own self-respect and to justice for their brothers in their power. Arthur and he had wrought it all out, had discovered as a crowning vindication that the result would be profitable in dollars, that their sane and shrewd utopianism would produce larger dividends than the sordid and slovenly methods of their competitors. "It is always so. Science is always economical as well as enlightened and humane," Dory was thinking when Adelaide's voice broke into his reverie.

"You are right, Dory," said she. "And I shall give up the house. I'll go to see Mrs. Dorsey now."

"The house?— What— Oh, yes—well—no— What made you change?"

She did not know the real reason—that, studying his face, the curve and set of his head, the strength of the personality which she was too apt to take for granted most of the time because he was simple and free from pretense, she had been reminded that he was not a man to be trifled with, that she would

better bestir herself and give more thought and attention to what was going on in that superbly shaped head of his—about her, about her and him. "Oh, I don't just know," replied she, quite honestly. "It seems to me now that there'll be too much fuss and care and—sham. And I intend to interest myself in *your* work. You've hardly spoken of it since I got back."

"There's been so little time——"

"You mean," she interrupted, "I've been so busy unpacking my silly dresses and hats and making and receiving silly calls."

"Now you're in one of your penitential moods," laughed Dory. "And to-morrow you'll wish you hadn't changed about the house. No—that's settled. We'll take it, and see what the consequences are."

Adelaide brightened. His tone was his old self, and she did want that house so intensely! "I can be useful to Dory there; I can do so much on the social side of the university life. He doesn't appreciate the value of those things in advancing a career. He thinks a career is made by work only. But I'll show him! I'll make his house the center of the university!"

Mrs. Dorsey had "Villa d'Orsay" carved on the stone pillars of her great wrought-iron gates, to remind the populace that, while her late father-in-law, "Buck" Dorsey, was the plainest of butchers and meat packers, his ancestry was of the proudest. With the rise of its "upper class" Saint X had gone in diligently for genealogy, had developed reverence for "tradition" and "blood," had established a Society of Family Histories, a chapter of the Colonial Dames, another of Daughters of the Revolution, and was in a fair way to rival the seaboard cities in devotion to the imported follies and frauds of "family." Dory at first indulged his sense of humor upon their Dorsey or d'Orsay finery. It seemed to him they must choose between making a joke of it and having it make a joke of them. But he desisted when he saw that it grated on Del for him to speak of her and himself as "caretakers for the rich." And presently his disposition to levity died of itself.

It sobered and disheartened and, yes, disgusted him as he was forced to admit to himself the reality of her delight in receiving people in the great drawing room, of her content in the vacuous, time-wasting habits, of her sense of superiority through having at her command a troop of servants—Mrs. Dorsey's servants! He himself disliked servants about, hated to abet a fellow-being in looking on himself or herself as an inferior; and he regarded as one of the basest, as well as subtlest poisons of snobbishness, the habit of telling others to do for one the menial, personal things which can be done with dignity only by oneself. Once, in Paris—after Besançon—Janet spoke of some of her aristocratic acquaintances on the other side as "acting as if they had always been used to everything; so different from even the best people at home." Dory remembered how Adelaide promptly took her up, gave instance after instance in proof that European aristocrats were in fact as vulgar in their satisfaction in servility as were the newest of the newly aristocratic at home, but simply had a different way of showing it. "A more vulgar way," she said, Janet unable to refute her. "Yes, far more vulgar, Jen, because deliberately concealed; just as vanity that swells in secret is far worse than frank, childish conceit."

And now— These vanities of hers, sprung from the old roots which in Paris she had been eager to kill and he was hoping were about dead, sprung in vigor and spreading in weedy exuberance! He often looked at her in sad wonder when she was unconscious of it. "What *is* the matter?" he would repeat. "She is farther away than in Paris, where the temptation to this sort of nonsense was at least plausible." And he grew silent with her and shut himself in alone during the evening hours which he could not spend at the university. She knew why, knew also that he was right, ceased to bore herself and irritate him with attempts to make the Villa d'Orsay the social center of the university. But she continued to waste her days in the inane pastimes of Saint X's fashionable world, though ashamed of herself and disgusted with her mode of life. For snobbishness is essentially a provincial vice, due full as much

to narrowness as to ignorance; and, thus, it is most potent in the small "set" in the small town. In the city even the narrowest are compelled to at least an occasional glimpse of wider horizons; but in the small town only the vigilant and resolute ever get so much as a momentary point of view. She told herself, in angry attempt at self-excuse, that he ought to take her in hand, ought to snatch her away from that which she had not the courage to give up of herself. Yet she knew she would hate him should he try to do it. She assumed that was the reason he didn't; and it was part of the reason, but a lesser part than his unacknowledged, furtive fear of what he might discover as to his own feelings toward her, were there just then a casting up and balancing of their confused accounts with each other.

Both were relieved, as at a crisis postponed, when it became necessary for him to go abroad again immediately. "I don't see how *you* can leave," said he, thus intentionally sparing her a painful effort in saying what at once came into the mind of each.

"We could cable Mrs. Dorsey," she suggested lamely. She was at the Louis Quinze desk in the Louis Quinze sitting room, and her old gold negligee matched in charmingly, and the whole setting brought out the sheen, faintly golden, over her clear skin, the peculiarly fresh and intense shade of her violet eyes, the suggestion of gold in her thick hair, with its wan, autumnal coloring, such as one sees in a field of dead ripe grain. She was doing her monthly accounts, and the showing was not pleasant. She was a good housekeeper, a surprisingly good manager; but she did too much entertaining for their income.

Dory was too much occupied with the picture she made as she sat there to reply immediately. "I doubt," he finally replied, "if she could arrange by cable for some one else whom she would trust with her treasures. No, I guess you'll have to stay."

"I *wish* I hadn't taken this place!" she exclaimed. It was the first confession of what her real, her sane and intelligent self had been proclaiming loudly since the first flush of interest

and pleasure in her "borrowed plumage" had receded. "Why *do* you let me make a fool of myself?"

"No use going into that," replied he, on guard not to take too seriously this belated penitence. He was used to Del's fits of remorse, so used to them that he thought them less valuable than they really were, or might have been had he understood her better—or, not bothered about trying to understand her. "I shan't be away long, I imagine," he went on, "and I'll have to rush round from England to France, to Germany, to Austria, to Switzerland. All that would be exhausting for you, and only a little of the time pleasant."

His words sounded to her like a tolling over the grave of that former friendship and comradeship of theirs. "I really believe you'll be glad to get away alone," cried she, lips smiling raillery, eyes full of tears.

"Do you think so?" said Dory, as if tossing back her jest. But both knew the truth, and each knew that the other knew it. He was as glad to escape from those surroundings as she to be relieved of a presence which edged on her other-self to scoff and rail and sneer at her. It had become bitterness to him to enter the gates of the Villa d'Orsay. His nerves were so wrought up that to look about the magnificent but too palace-like, too hotel-like rooms was to struggle with a longing to run amuck and pause not until he had reduced the splendor to smithereens. And in that injustice of chronic self-excuse which characterizes all human beings who do not live by intelligently formed and intelligently executed plan, she was now trying to soothe herself with blaming him for her low spirits; in fact, they were wholly the result of her consciously unworthy mode of life, and of an incessant internal warfare, exhausting and depressing. Also, the day would surely come when he would ask how she was contriving to keep up such imposing appearances on their eighteen hundred a year; and then she would have to choose between directly deceiving him and telling him that she had broken—no, not broken, that was too harsh—rather, had not yet fulfilled the promise to give up the income her father left her.

After a constrained silence, "I really don't need anyone to stop here with me," she said to him, as if she had been thinking of it and not of the situation between them, "but I'll get Stella Wilmot and her brother."

"Arden?" said Dory, doubtfully. "I know he's all right in some ways, and he has stopped drinking since he got the place at the bank. But——"

"If we show we have confidence in him," replied Adelaide, "I think it will help him."

"Very well," said Dory. "Besides, it isn't easy to find people of the sort you'd be willing to have, who can leave home and come here."

Adelaide colored as she smiled. "Perhaps that *was* my reason, rather than helping him," she said.

Dory flushed. "Oh, I didn't mean to insinuate that!" he protested, and checked himself from saying more. In their mood each would search the other's every word for a hidden thrust, and would find it.

The constraint between them, which thus definitely entered the stage of deep cleavage where there had never been a joining, persisted until the parting. Since the wedding he had kissed her but once—on her arrival from Europe. Then, there was much bustle of greeting from others, and neither had had chance to be self-conscious. When they were at the station for his departure, it so happened that no one had come with them. As the porter warned them that the train was about to move, they shook hands and hesitated, blushing and conscious of themselves and of spectators. "Good-by," stammered Dory, with a dash at her cheek.

"Good-by," she murmured, making her effort at the same instant.

The result was a confusion of features and hat brims that threw them into a panic, then into laughter, and so made the second attempt easy and successful. It was a real meeting of the lips. His arm went round her, her hand pressed tenderly on his shoulder, and he felt a trembling in her form, saw a sudden gleam of light leap into and from her eyes. And all in that

flash the secret of his mistake in managing his love affair burst upon him.

"Good-by, Dory—dear," she was murmuring, a note in her voice like the shy answer of a hermit thrush to the call of her mate.

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor, and the wheels began to move.

"Good-by—good-by," he stammered, his blood surging through his head.

It came into her mind to say, "I care for you more than I knew." But his friend the conductor was thrusting him up the steps of the car. "I wish I had said it," thought she, watching the train disappear round the curve. "I'll write it."

But she did not. When the time came to write, that idea somehow would not fit in with the other things she was setting down. "I think I do care for him—as a friend," she decided. "If he had only compelled me to find out the state of my own mind! What a strange man! I don't see how he can love me, for he knows me as I am. Perhaps he really doesn't; sometimes I think he couldn't care for a woman as a woman wants to be cared for." Then as his face as she had last seen it rose before her, and her lips once more tingled, "Oh, yes, he *does* care! And without his love how wretched I'd be! What a greedy I am—wanting his love and taking it, and giving nothing in return." That last more than half-sincere, though she, like not a few of her sisters in the "Woman's Paradise," otherwise known as the United States of America, had been spoiled into greatly exaggerating the value of her graciously condescending to let herself be loved.

And she was lonely without him. If he could have come back at the end of a week or a month, he would have been received with an ardor that would have melted every real obstacle between them. Also, it would have dissipated the far more obstructive imaginary obstacles from their infection with the latter-day vice of psychologizing about matters which lie in the realm of physiology, not of psychology. But he did not come;

and absence, like bereavement, has its climax, after which the thing that was begins to be as if it had not been.

He was gone; and that impetuous parting caress of his had roused in her an impulse that would never again sleep, would pace its cage restlessly, eager for the chance to burst forth. And he had roused it when he would not be there to make its imperious clamor personal to himself.

As Estelle was at her shop all day, and not a few of the evenings, Del began to see much of Henrietta Hastings. Grandfather Fuller was now dead and forgotten in the mausoleum into which he had put one-fifth of his fortune, to the great discontent of the heirs. Henrietta's income had expanded from four thousand a year to twenty; and she spent her days in thinking of and talking of the careers to which she could help her husband if he would only shake off the lethargy which seized him the year after his marriage to a Fuller heiress. But Hastings would not; he was happy in his books and in his local repute for knowing everything there was to be known. Month by month he grew fatter and lazier and slower of speech. Henrietta pretended to be irritated against him, and the town had the habit of saying that "If Hastings had some of his wife's 'get up' he wouldn't be making her unhappy but would be winning a big name for himself." In fact, had Hastings tried to bestir himself at something definite in the way of action, Henrietta would have been really disturbed instead of simply pretending to be. She had a good mind, a keen wit that had become bitter with unlicensed indulgence; but she was as indolent and purposeless as her husband. All her energy went in talk about doing something, and every day she had a new scheme, with yesterday's forgotten or disdained.

Adelaide pretended to herself to regard Henrietta as an energetic and stimulating person, though she knew that Henrietta's energy, like her own, like that of most women of the sheltered, servant-attended class, was a mere blowing off of steam by an active but valveless engine of a mind. But this

pretense enabled her to justify herself for long mornings and afternoons at the Country Club with Henrietta. They talked of activity, of accomplishing this and that and the other; they read fitfully at serious books; they planned novels and plays; they separated each day with a comfortable feeling that they had been usefully employed. And each did learn much from the other; but, as each confirmed the other in the habitual mental vices of the women, and of an increasing number of the men, of our quite comfortable classes, the net result of their intercourse was pitifully poor, the poorer for their fond delusions that they were improving themselves. They laughed at the "culture craze" which, raging westward, had seized upon all the women of Saint X with incomes, or with husbands or fathers to support them in idleness—the craze for thinking, reading, and talking cloudily or muddily on cloudy or muddy subjects. Henrietta and Adelaide jeered; yet they were themselves the victims of another, and, if possible, more poisonous, bacillus of the same sluggard family.

One morning Adelaide, in graceful ease in her favorite nook in the small northwest portico of the club house, was reading a most imposingly bound and illustrated work on Italian architecture written by a smatterer for smatterers. She did a great deal of reading in this direction because it was also the direction of her talent, and so she could make herself think she was getting ready to join in Dory's work when he returned. She heard footsteps just round the corner, and looked up. She and Ross Whitney were face to face.

There was no chance for evasion. He, with heightened color, lifted his hat; she, with a nonchalance that made her proud of herself, smiled and stretched out her hand. "Hello, Ross," said she, languidly friendly. "When did *you* come to town?" And she congratulated herself that her hair had gone up so well that morning and that her dress was one of her most becoming—from Paris, from Paquin—a year old, it is true, but later than the latest in Saint X and fashionable even for Sherry's at lunch time.

Ross, the expert, got himself together and made cover with-

out any seeming of scramble; but his not quite easy eyes betrayed him to her. "About two hours ago," replied he.

"Is Theresa with you?" She gazed tranquilly at him as she fired this center shot. She admired the coolness with which he received it.

"No; she's up at her father's place—on the lake shore," he answered. He, too, was looking particularly well, fresh yet experienced, and in dress a model, with his serge of a strange, beautiful shade of blue, his red tie and socks, and his ruby-set cuff-links. "Mr. Howland is ill, and she's nursing him. I'm taking a few days off—came down to try to sell father's place for him."

"You're going to sell Point Helen?" said Adelaide, politely regretful. "Then I suppose we shan't see your people here any more. Your mother'll no doubt spend most of her time abroad, now that Janet is married there."

Ross did not answer immediately. He was looking into the distance, his expression melancholy. His abstraction gave Adelaide a chance to verify the impression she had got from a swift but femininely penetrating first glance. Yes, he did look older; no, not exactly older—sad, rather. Evidently he was unhappy, distinctly unhappy. And as handsome and as tasteful as ever—the band of his straw hat, the flower in his buttonhole, his tie, his socks—all in harmony; no ostentation, just the unerring, quiet taste of a gentleman. What a satisfactory person to look at! To be sure, his character— However, character has nothing to do with the eye-pleasures, and they are undeniably agreeable. Then there were his manners, and his mind—such a man of the world! Of course he wasn't for one instant to be compared with Dory—who was? Still, it was a pity that Dory had a prejudice against showing all that he really was, a pity he had to be known to be appreciated—that is, appreciated by the "right sort" of people. Of course, the observant few could see him in his face, which was certainly distinguished—yes, far more distinguished than Ross's, if not so regularly handsome.

"I've been looking over the old place," Ross was saying,

" and I've decided to ask father to keep it. Theresa doesn't like it here; but I do, and I can't bring myself to cut the last cords. As I wandered over the place I found myself getting so sad and sentimental that I hurried away to escape a fit of the blues."

" We're accustomed to that sort of talk," said Adelaide with a mocking smile in her delightful eyes. " People who used to live here and come back on business occasionally always tell us how much more beautiful Saint X is than any other place on earth. But they take the first train for Chicago or Cincinnati or anywhere at all."

" So you find it dull here? "

" I? " Adelaide shrugged her charming shoulders slightly. " Not so very. My life is here—the people, the things I'm used to. I've a sense of peace that I don't have anywhere else." She gazed dreamily away. " And peace is the greatest asset."

" The greatest asset," repeated Ross absently. " You are to be envied."

" *I* think so," assented she, a curious undertone of defiance in her voice. She had a paniclike impulse to begin to talk of Dory; but, though she cast about diligently, she could find no way of introducing him that would not have seemed awkward —pointed and provincially prudish.

" What are you reading? " he asked presently.

She turned the book so that he could see the title. His eyes wandered from it to linger on her slender white fingers—on the one where a plain band of gold shone eloquently. It fascinated and angered him; and she saw it, and was delighted. Her voice had a note of triumph in it as she said, putting the book on the table beside her, " Foolish, isn't it, to be reading how to build beautiful houses "—she was going to say, " when one will probably never build any house at all." She bethought her that this might sound like a sigh over Dory's poverty and over the might-have-been. So she ended, " when the weather is so deliciously lazy."

" I know the chap who wrote it," said Ross. " Clever—really unusual talent. But the fashionable women took him up,

made him a toady and a snob, like the rest of the men of their set. How that sort of thing eats out manhood and womanhood!"

Just what Dory often said! "My husband says," she answered, "that whenever the world has got a fair start toward becoming civilized, along have come wealth and luxury to smother and kill. It's very interesting to read history from that standpoint, instead of taking the usual view—that luxury produces the arts and graces."

"Dory is a remarkable man," said Ross with enthusiasm. "He's amazingly modest; but there are some men so big that they can't hide, no matter how hard they try. He's one of them."

Adelaide was in a glow, so happy did this sincere and just tribute make her, so relieved did she feel. She was talking to one of Dory's friends and admirers, not with an old sweetheart of hers about whom her heart, perhaps, might be—well, a little sore, and from whom radiated a respectful, and therefore subtle, suggestion that the past was very much the present for him. She hastened to expand upon Dory, upon his work; and, as she talked of the university, she found she had a pride in it, and an interest, and a knowledge, too, which astonished her. And Ross listened, made appreciative comments. And so, on and on. When Henrietta came they were laughing and talking like the best of old friends; and at Ross's invitation the three lunched at the club and spent the afternoon together.

"I think marriage has improved Ross," said Henrietta, as she and Adelaide were driving home together after tea—tea with Ross.

"Theresa is a very sweet woman," said Adelaide dutifully.

"Oh, I don't mean that—any more than you do," replied Henrietta. "I mean marriage has chastened him—the only way it ever improves anybody."

"No doubt he and Theresa are happy together," said Adelaide, clinging to her pretense with a persistence that might have given her interesting and valuable light upon herself had she noted it.

"Happy?" Henrietta Hastings laughed. "Only stupid people are happy, my dear. Theresa may be happy, but not Ross. He's far too intelligent. And Theresa isn't capable of giving him even those moments of happiness that repay the intelligent for their routine of the other sort of thing."

"Marriage doesn't mean much in a man's life," said Adelaide. "He has his business or profession. He is married only part of each day, and that the least important part to him."

"Yes," replied Henrietta, "marriage is for a man simply a peg in his shoe—in place or, as with Ross Whitney, out of place. One look at his face was enough to show me that he was limping and aching and groaning."

Adelaide found this pleasantry amusing far beyond its merits. "You can't tell," said she. "Theresa doesn't seem the same to him that she does to—to us."

"Worse," replied Henrietta, "worse. It's fortunate they're rich. If the better class of people hadn't the money that enables them to put buffers round themselves, wife-beating wouldn't be confined to the slums. Think of life in one or two small rooms with a Theresa Howland!"

Adelaide had fallen, as far as could one of her generous and tolerant disposition, into Henrietta's most infectious habit of girding at everyone humorously—the favorite pastime of the idle who are profoundly discontented with themselves. By the time Mrs. Hastings left her at the lofty imported gates of Villa d'Orsay, they had done the subject of Theresa full justice, and Adelaide entered the house with that sense of self-contempt which cannot but come to any decent person after meting out untempered justice to a fellow-mortal. This did not last, however; the pleasure in the realization that Ross did not care for Theresa and did care for herself was too keen. As the feminine test of feminine success is the impression a woman makes upon men, Adelaide would have been neither human nor woman had she not been pleased with Ross's discreet and sincerely respectful, and by no means deliberate or designing disclosure. It was not the proof of her power to charm the male that had made her indignant at herself. "How weak

we women are!" she said to herself, trying to assume a penitence she could not make herself feel. "We really ought to be locked away in harems. No doubt Dory trusts me absolutely—that's because other women are no temptation to him—that is, I suppose they aren't. If he were different, he'd be afraid I had his weakness—we all think everybody has at least a touch of our infirmities. Of course I can be trusted; I've sense enough not to have my head turned by what may have been a mere clever attempt to smooth over the past." Then she remembered Ross's look at her hand, at her wedding ring, and Henrietta's confirmation of her own diagnosis. "But why should *that* interest *me*," she thought, impatient with herself for lingering where her ideal of self-respect forbade. "I don't love Ross Whitney. He pleases me, as he pleases any woman he wishes to make an agreeable impression upon. And, naturally, I like to know that he really did care for me and is ashamed and repentant of the baseness that made him act as he did. But beyond that, I care nothing about him—nothing. I may not care for Dory exactly as I should; but at least knowing him has made it impossible for me to go back to the Ross sort of man."

That seemed clear and satisfactory. But, strangely, her mind jumped to the somewhat unexpected conclusion, "And I'll not see him again."

She wrote Dory that night a long, long letter, the nearest to a love letter she had ever written him. She brought Ross in quite casually; yet— What is the mystery of the telltale penumbra round the written word? Why was it that Dory, in far-away Vienna, with the memory of her strong and of the Villa d'Orsay dim, reading the letter for the first time, thought it the best he had ever got from her; and the next morning, reading it again, could think of nothing but Ross, and what Adelaide had really thought about him deep down in that dark well of the heart where we rarely let even our own eyes look intently?

CHAPTER XXIII

A STROLL IN A BYPATH

ROSS had intended to dine at the club; but Mrs. Hastings's trap was hardly clear of the grounds when he, to be free to think uninterruptedly, set out through the woods for Point Helen.

Even had he had interests more absorbing than pastimes, display, and money-making by the "brace" game of "high finance" with its small risks of losing and smaller risks of being caught, even if he had been married to a less positive and incessant irritant than Theresa was to him, he would still not have forgotten Adelaide. Forgetfulness comes with the finished episode, never with the unfinished. In the circumstances, there could be but one effect from seeing her again. His regrets blazed up into fierce remorse, became the reckless raging of a passion to which obstacles and difficulties are as fuel to fire.

Theresa, once the matter of husband-getting was safely settled, had no restraint of prudence upon her self-complacence. She "let herself go" completely, with results upon her character, her mind, and her personal appearance that were depressing enough to the casual beholder, but appalling to those who were in her intimacy of the home. Ross watched her deteriorate in gloomy and unreproving silence. She got herself together sufficiently for as good public appearance as a person of her wealth and position needed to make, he reasoned; what did it matter how she looked and talked at home where, after all, the only person she could hope to please was herself? He held aloof, drawn from his aloofness occasionally by her whim to indulge herself in what she regarded as proofs of his love.

Her pouting, her whimpering, her abject but meaningless self-depreciation, her tears, were potent, not for the flattering reason she assigned, but because he, out of pity for her and self-reproach, and dread of her developing her mother's weakness, would lash himself into the small show of tenderness sufficient to satisfy her.

And now, steeped in the gall of as bitter a draught as experience forces folly to drink anew each day to the dregs—the realization that, though the man marries the money only, he lives with the wife only—Ross had met Adelaide again. "I'll go to Chicago in the morning," was his conclusion. "I'll do the honorable thing"—he sneered at himself—"since trying the other would only result in her laughing at me and in my being still more miserable."

But when morning came he was critical of the clothes his valet offered him, spent an hour in getting himself groomed for public appearance, then appeared at the Country Club for breakfast instead of driving to the station. And after breakfast, he put off his departure "until to-morrow or next day," and went to see Mr. and Mrs. Hastings. And what more natural then than that Henrietta should take him to the Villa d'Orsay "to show you how charmingly Del has installed herself." "And perhaps," said Henrietta, "she and Arden Wilmot will go for a drive. He has quit the bank because they objected to his resting two hours in the middle of the day." What more natural than that Adelaide should alter her resolution under the compulsion of circumstance, should spend the entire morning in the gardens, she with Ross, Henrietta with Arden? Finally, to avoid strain upon her simple domestic arrangements in that period of retrenchment, what more natural than falling in with Ross's proposal of lunch at Indian Mound? And who ever came back in a hurry from Indian Mound, with its quaint vast earthworks, its ugly, incredibly ancient potteries and flint instruments that could be uncovered anywhere with the point of a cane or parasol; its superb panorama, bounded by the far blue hills where, in days that were ancient when history began, fires were lighted by sentinels to signal the enemy's approach

to a people whose very dust, whose very name has perished? It was six o'clock before they began the return drive; at seven they were passing the Country Club, and, of course, they dined there and joined in the little informal dance afterwards; and later, supper and cooling drinks in a corner of the veranda, with the moon streaming upon them and the enchanted breath of the forest enchaining the senses.

What a day! How obligingly all unpleasant thoughts fled! How high and bright rose the mountains all round the horizon of the present, shutting out yesterday and to-morrow! "This has been *the* happy day of my life," said Ross as they lingered behind the other two on the way to the last 'bus for the town. "The happiest"—in a lower tone—"thus far."

And Del was sparkling assent, encouragement even; and her eyes were gleaming defiantly at the only-too-plainly-to-be-read faces of the few hilltop people still left at the club house. "Surely a woman has the right to enjoy herself innocently in the twentieth century," she was saying to herself. "Dory wouldn't want me to sit moping alone. I am young; I'll have enough of that after I'm old—one is old so much longer than young." And she looked up at Ross, and very handsome he was in that soft moonlight, his high-blazing passion glorifying his features. "I, too, have been happy," she said to him. Then, with a vain effort to seem and to believe herself at ease, "I wish Dory could have been along."

But Ross was not abashed by the exorcism of that name; her bringing it in was too strained, would have been amusing if passion were not devoid of the sense of humor. "She *does* care for me!" he was thinking dizzily. "And I can't live without her—and *won't*!"

His mother had been writing him her discoveries that his father, in wretched health and goaded by physical torment to furious play at the green tables of "high finance," was losing steadily, swiftly, heavily. But Ross read her letters as indifferently as he read Theresa's appeals to him to come to Windrift. It took a telegram—"Matters much worse than I

"'I'll be back in a few days—a very few.'"

thought. You must be here to talk with him before he begins business to-morrow"—to shock him into the realization that he had been imperiling the future he was dreaming of and planning—his and Del's future.

On the way to the train he stopped at the Villa d'Orsay, saw her and Henrietta at the far end of Mrs. Dorsey's famed white-and-gold garden. Henrietta was in the pavilion reading. A few yards away Adelaide, head bent and blue sunshade slowly turning as it rested on her shoulder, was strolling round the great flower-rimmed, lily-strewn outer basin of Mrs. Dorsey's famed fountain, the school of crimson fish, like a streak of fire in the water, following her. When she saw him coming toward them in traveling suit, instead of the white serge he always wore on such days as was that, she knew he was going away—a fortunate forewarning, for she thus had time to force a less telltale expression before he announced the reason for his call. "But," he added, "I'll be back in a few days—a very few."

"Oh!" was all Del said; but her tone of relief, her sudden brightening, were more significant than any words could have been.

Henrietta now joined them. "You take the afternoon express?" said she.

Ross could not conceal how severe a test of his civility this interruption was. "Yes," said he. "My trap is in front of the house."

There he colored before Henrietta's expression, a mingling of amusement, indignation, and contempt, a caustic comment upon his disregard of the effect of such indiscretion upon a Saint X young married woman's reputation. "Then," said she, looking straight and significantly at him, "you'll be able to drop me at my house on the way."

"Certainly," was his prompt assent. When Saint X's morality police should see him leaving the grounds with her, they would be silenced as to this particular occurrence at least. After a few minutes of awkward commonplaces, he and Henrietta went up the lawns, leaving Del there. At the last point

from which the end of the garden could be seen, he dropped behind, turned, saw her in exactly the same position, the fountain and the water lilies before her, the center and climax of those stretches of white-and-gold blossoms. The sunshade rested lightly upon her shoulder, and its azure concave made a harmonious background for her small, graceful head with the airily plumed hat set so becomingly upon those waves of dead-gold hair. He waved to her; but she made no sign of having seen.

When Henrietta returned, Adelaide had resumed her reverie and her slow march round the fountain. Henrietta watched with a quizzical expression for some time before saying: "If I hadn't discouraged him, I believe he'd have blurted it all out to me—all he came to say to you."

Del was still absent-minded as she answered: "It's too absurd. People are so censorious, so low-minded."

"They are," rejoined Mrs. Hastings. "And, I'm sorry to say, as a rule they're right."

The curve of Del's delicate eyebrows and of her lips straightened.

"All the trouble comes through our having nothing to do," pursued Henrietta, disregarding those signs that her "meddling" was unwelcome. "The idle women! We ought to be busy at something useful—you and I and the rest of 'em. Then we'd not be tempted to kill time doing things that cause gossip, and may cause scandal." Seeing that Adelaide was about to make some curt retort, she added: "Now, don't pretend, Del. You know, yourself, that they're always getting into mischief and getting the men into mischief."

"Don't you ever feel, Henrietta, that we're simply straws in the strong wind?"

"Fate sometimes does force mischief on men and women," was Henrietta's retort, "and it ceases to be mischief—becomes something else, I'm not sure just what. But usually fate has nothing to do with the matter. It's we ourselves that course for mischief, like a dog for rabbits."

Del, in sudden disdain of evasion, faced her with, "Well, Henrietta, what of it?"

Mrs. Hastings elevated and lowered her shoulders. "Simply that you're seeing too much of Ross—too much for his good, if not for your own."

Del's sunshade was revolving impatiently.

"It's as plain as black on white," continued Mrs. Hastings, "that he's madly in love with you—in love as only an experienced man can be with an experienced and developed woman."

"Well, what of it?" Del's tone was hostile, defiant.

"You can't abruptly stop seeing him. Everyone'd say you and he were meeting secretly."

"Really!"

"But you can be careful how you treat him. You can show him, and everybody, that there's nothing in it. You must—" Henrietta hesitated, dared; "you must be just friendly, as you are with Arden and the rest of the men."

Hiram's daughter was scarlet. Full a minute, and a very full minute, of silence. Then Adelaide said coldly: "Thank you. And now that you've freed your mind I hope you'll keep it free for your own affairs."

"Ouch!" cried Henrietta, making a wry face. And she devoted the rest of the afternoon to what she realized, at the parting, was the vain task of mollifying Del. She knew that thenceforth she and Adelaide would drift apart; and she was sorry, for she liked her—liked to talk with her, liked to go about with her. Adelaide's beauty attracted the men, and a male audience was essential to Henrietta's happiness; she found the conversation of women—the women she felt socially at ease with—tedious, and their rather problematic power of appreciation limited to what came from men. As she grew older, and less and less pleasing to the eye, the men showed more and more clearly how they had deceived themselves in thinking it was her brains that had made them like her. As Henrietta, with mournful cynicism, put it: "Men the world over care little about women beyond their physical charm. To realize it, look at us American women, who can do nothing toward

furthering men's ambitions. We've only our physical charms to offer; we fall when we lose them. And so our old women and our homely women, except those that work or that have big houses and social power, have no life of their own, live on sufferance, alone or the slaves of their daughters or of some pretty young woman to whom they attach themselves."

The days dragged for Adelaide. "I'm afraid he'll write," said she—meaning that she hoped he would. Indeed, she felt that he had written, but had destroyed the letters. And she was right; almost all the time he could spare from his efforts to save his father from a sick but obstinately active man's bad judgment was given to writing to her—formal letters which he tore up as too formal, passionate letters which he destroyed as unwarranted and unwise, when he had not yet, face to face, in words, told her his love and drawn from her what he believed was in her heart. The days dragged; she kept away from Henrietta, from all "our set," lest they should read in her dejected countenance the truth, and more.

CHAPTER XXIV

DR. MADELENE PRESCRIBES

ADELENE'S anteroom was full of poor people. They flocked to her, though she did not pauperize them by giving her services free. She had got the reputation of miraculous cures, the theory in the tenements being that her father had swindled his satanic "familiar" by teaching his daughter without price what he had had to pay for with his immortal soul. Adelaide refused the chair a sick-looking young artisan awkwardly pressed upon her. Leaning against the window seat, she tried to interest herself in her fellow-invalids. But she had not then the secret which unlocks the mystery of faces; she was still in the darkness in which most of us proudly strut away our lives, deriding as dreamers or cranks those who are in the light and see. With almost all of us the innate sympathies of race, which give even wolves and vultures the sense of fraternal companionship in the storm and stress of the struggle for existence, are deep overlaid with various kinds of that egotistic ignorance called class feeling. Adelaide felt sorry for "the poor," but she had yet to learn that she was of them, as poor in other and more important ways as they in money and drawing-room manners. Surfaces and the things of the surface obscured or distorted all the realities for her, as for most of us; and the fact that her intelligence laughed at and scorned her perverted instincts was of as little help to her as it is to most of us.

When Madelene was free she said to her sister-in-law, in mock seriousness, "Well, and what can I do for *you*?" as if she were another patient.

Adelaide's eyes shifted. Clearly Madelene's keen, pretense-scattering gaze was not one to invite to inspect a matter which might not look at all well stripped of its envelopes of phrase and haze. She wished she had not come; indeed, she had been half-wishing it during the whole three-quarters of an hour of watching and thinking on Madelene's wonderful life, so crowded with interest, with achievement, with all that Hiram Ranger's daughter called, and believed, "the real thing."

"Nothing, nothing at all," replied she to Madelene's question. "I just dropped in to annoy you with my idle self—or, maybe, to please you. You know we're taught at church that a large part of the joy of the saved comes from watching the misery of the damned."

But Madelene had the instinct of the physician born. "She has something on her mind and wants me to help her," she thought. Aloud she said: "I feel idle, myself. We'll sit about for an hour, and you'll stay to dinner with Arthur and me—we have it here to-day, as your mother is going out. Afterwards I must do my round."

A silence, with Adelaide wondering where Ross was and just when he would return. Then Madelene went on: "I've been trying to persuade your mother to give up the house, change it into a hospital."

The impudence of it! *Their* house, *their* home; and this newcomer into the family—a newcomer from nowhere—trying to get it away from them! "Mother said something about it," said Adelaide frostily. "But she didn't say *you* had been at her. I think she ought to be left alone in her old age."

"The main thing is to keep her interested in life, don't you think?" suggested Madelene, noting how Adelaide was holding herself in check, but disregarding it. "Your mother's a plain, natural person and never has felt at home in that big house. Indeed, I don't think any human being ever does feel at home in a big house. There was a time when they fitted in with the order of things; but now they've become silly, it

seems to me, except for public purposes. When we all get sensible and go in for being somebody instead of for showing off, we'll live in convenient, comfortable, really tasteful and individual houses and have big buildings only for general use."

"I'm afraid the world will never grow up into your ideals, Madelene," said Del with restrained irony. "At least not in our day."

"I'm in no hurry," replied Madelene good-naturedly. "The most satisfactory thing about common sense is that one can act on it without waiting for others to get round to it. But we weren't talking of those who would rather be ignorantly envied than intelligently happy. We were talking of your mother."

"Mother was content with her mode of life until you put these 'advanced' ideas into her head."

"'Advanced' is hardly the word," said Madelene. "They used to be her ideas—always have been, underneath. If it weren't that she is afraid of hurting your feelings, she'd not hesitate an instant. She'd take the small house across the way and give herself the happiness of helping with the hospital she'd install in the big house. You know she always had a passion for waiting on people. Here's her chance to gratify it to good purpose. Why should she let the fact that she has money enough not to have to work stand between her and happy usefulness?"

"What does Arthur think?" asked Del. Her resentment was subsiding in spite of her determined efforts to keep it glowing; Madelene knew the secret of manner that enables one to be habitually right without giving others the sense of being put irritatingly in the wrong. "But," smiling, "I needn't inquire. Of course he assents to whatever *you* say."

"You know Arthur better than that," replied Madelene, with no trace of resentment. She had realized from the beginning of the conversation that Del's nerves were on edge; her color, alternately rising and fading, and her eyes, now sparkling now dull, could only mean fever from a tempest of

secret emotion. "He and I usually agree simply because we see things in about the same light."

"You furnish the light," teased Adelaide.

"That was in part so at first," admitted her sister-in-law. "Arthur had got many foolish notions in his head through accepting thoughtlessly the ideas of the people he traveled with. But, once he let his good sense get the upper hand— He helps me now far more than I help him."

"Has he consented to let them give him a salary yet?" asked Adelaide, not because she was interested, but because she desperately felt that the conversation must be kept alive. Perhaps Ross was even now on his way to Saint X.

"He still gets what he fixed on at first—ten dollars a week more than the foreman."

"Honestly, Madelene," said Adelaide, in a flush and flash of irritation, "don't you think that's absurd? With the responsibility of the whole business on his shoulders, you know he ought to have more than a common workman."

"In the first place you must not forget that everyone is paid very high wages at the university works now."

"And he's the cause of that—of the mills doing so well," said Del. She could see Ross entering the gates—at the house—inquiring— What was she talking to Madelene about? Yes, about Arthur and the mills. "Even the men that criticise him—Arthur, I mean—most severely for 'sowing discontent in the working class,' as they call it," she went on, "concede that he has wonderful business ability. So he ought to have a huge salary."

"No doubt he earns it," replied Madelene. "But the difficulty is that he can't take it without it's coming from the other workmen. You see, money is coined sweat. All its value comes from somebody's labor. He deserves to be rewarded for happening to have a better brain than most men, and for using it better. But there's no fund for rewarding the clever for being cleverer than most of their fellow-beings, any more than there's a fund to reward the handsome for being above the average in looks. So he has to choose between rob-

bing his fellow-workmen, who are in his power, and going without riches. He prefers going without."

"That's very noble of you both, I'm sure," said Adelaide absently. The Chicago express would be getting in at four o'clock—about five hours. Absurd! The morning papers said Mr. Whitney had had a relapse. "Very noble," she repeated absently. "But I doubt if anybody will appreciate it."

Madelene smiled cheerfully. "That doesn't worry Arthur or me," said she, with her unaffected simplicity. "We're not looking for appreciation. We're looking for a good time." Del, startled, began to listen to Madelene. A good time—"And it so happens," came in Madelene's sweet, honest voice, "that we're unable to have it, unless we feel that we aren't getting it by making some one else have a not-so-good time or a very bad time indeed. You've heard of Arthur's latest scheme?"

"Some one told me he was playing smash at the mills, encouraging the workmen to idleness and all that sort of thing," said Del. Somehow she felt less feverish, seemed compelled to attention by Madelene's voice and eyes. "But I didn't hear or understand just how."

"He's going to establish a seven-hours' working day; and, if possible, cut it down to six." Madelene's eyes were sparkling. Del watched her longingly, enviously. How interested she was in these useful things. How fine it must be to be interested where one could give one's whole heart without concealment—or shame! "And," Madelene was saying, "the university is to change its schedules so that all its practical courses will be at hours when men working in the factory can take them. It's simply another development of his and Dory's idea that a factory belonging to a university ought to set a decent example—ought not to compel its men to work longer than is necessary for them to earn at honest wages a good living for themselves and their families."

"So that they can sit round the saloons longer," suggested Adelaide, and then she colored and dropped her eyes; she was

repeating Ross's comment on this sort of "concession to the working classes." She had thought it particularly acute when he made it. Now——

"No doubt most of them will spend their time foolishly at first," Madelene conceded. "Working people have had to work so hard for others—twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours a day, just to be allowed to live—that they've had really no free time at all; so they've had no chance to learn how to spend free time sensibly. But they'll learn, those of them that have capacity for improvement. Those that haven't will soon drop out."

"The factories can't make money on such a plan as that," said Adelaide, again repeating a remark of Ross's, but deliberately, because she believed it could be answered, wished to hear it answered.

"No, not dividends," replied Madelene. "But dividends are to be abolished in that department of the university, just as they are in the other departments. And the money the university needs is to come from tuition fees. Everyone is to pay for what he gets. Some one has to pay for it; why not the person who gets the benefit? Especially when the university's farms and workshops and factories give every student, man and woman, a chance to earn a good living. I tell you Adelaide, the time is coming when every kind of school except kindergarten will be self-supporting. And then you'll see a human race that is really fine, really capable, has a real standard of self-respect."

As Madelene talked, her face lighted up and all her latent magnetism was radiating. Adelaide, for no reason that was clear to her, yielded to a surge of impulse and, half-laughing, half in tears, suddenly kissed Madelene. "No wonder Arthur is mad about you, stark mad," she cried.

Madelene was for a moment surprised out of that perfect self-unconsciousness which is probably the rarest of human qualities, and which was her greatest charm to those who knew her well. She blushed furiously and angrily. Her and Arthur's love was to her most sacred, absolutely between them-

selves. When any outsider could observe them, even her sister Walpurga, she seemed so much the comrade and fellow-worker in her attitude toward him that people thought and spoke of their married life as "charming, but cold." Alone with him, she showed that which was for him alone—a passion whose strength had made him strong, as the great waves give their might to the swimmer who does not shrink from adventuring them. Adelaide's impulsive remark had violated her profoundest modesty; and in the shock she showed it.

"I beg your pardon!" exclaimed Adelaide, though she did not realize wherein she had offended. Love was an unexplored, an unsuspected mystery to her then—the more a mystery because she thought she knew from having read about it and discussed it and reasoned about it.

"Oh, I understand," said Madelene, contrite for her betraying expression. "Only—some day—when you really fall in love—you'll know why I was startled."

Adelaide shrank within herself. "Even Madelene," thought she, "who has not a glance for other people's affairs, knows how it is between Dory and me."

It was Madelene's turn to be repentant and apologetic. "I didn't mean quite that," she stammered. "Of course I know you care for Dory——"

The tears came to Del's eyes and the high color to her cheeks. "You needn't make excuses," she cried. "It's the truth. I don't care—in *that* way."

A silence; then Madelene, gently: "Was this what you came to tell me?"

Adelaide nodded slowly. "Yes, though I didn't know it."

"Why tell *me*?"

"Because I think I care for another man." Adelaide was not looking away. On the contrary, as she spoke, saying the words in an even, reflective tone, she returned her sister-in-law's gaze fully, frankly. "And I don't know what to do. It's very complicated—doubly complicated."

"The one you were first engaged to?"

"Yes," said Del. "Isn't it pitiful in me?" And there

was real self-contempt in her voice and in her expression. "I assumed that I despised him because he was selfish and calculating, and *such* a snob! Now I find I don't mind his selfishness, and that I, too, am a snob." She smiled drearily. "I suppose you feel the proper degree of contempt and aversion."

"We are all snobs," answered Madelene tranquilly. "It's one of the deepest dyes of the dirt we came from, the hardest to wash out."

"Besides," pursued Adelaide, "he and I have both learned by experience—which has come too late; it always does."

"Not at all," said Madelene briskly. "Experience is never too late. It's always invaluably useful in some way, no matter when it comes."

Adelaide was annoyed by Madelene's lack of emotion. She had thought her sister-in-law would be stirred by a recital so romantic, so dark with the menace of tragedy. Instead, the doctor was acting as if she were dealing with mere measles. Adelaide, unconsciously, of course—we are never conscious of the strong admixture of vanity in our "great" emotions—was piqued into explaining. "We can never be anything to each other. There's Dory; then there's Theresa. And I'd suffer anything rather than bring shame and pain on others."

Madelene smiled—somehow not irritatingly—an appeal to Del's sense of proportion. "Suffer," repeated she. "That's a good strong word for a woman to use who has health and youth and beauty, and material comfort—and a mind capable of an infinite variety of interests." Adelaide's tragic look was slipping from her. "Don't take too gloomy a view," continued the physician. "Disease and death and one other thing are the only really serious ills. In this case of yours everything will come round quite smooth, if you don't get hysterical and if Ross Whitney is really in earnest and not"—Madelene's tone grew even more deliberate—"not merely getting up a theatrical romance along the lines of the 'high-life' novels you idle people set such store by." She saw, in Del's wincing, that the shot had landed. "No," she went on, "your case is one of the commonplaces of life among those people—and they're

in all classes—who look for emotions and not for opportunities to be useful."

Del smiled, and Madelene hailed the returning sense of humor as an encouraging sign.

"The one difficult factor is Theresa," said Madelene, pushing on with the prescription. "She—I judge from what I've heard—she's what's commonly called a 'poor excuse for a woman.' We all know that type. You may be sure her vanity would soon find ways of consoling her. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred where one holds on after the other has let go the reason is vanity, wounded vanity—where it isn't the material consideration that explains why there are so many abandoned wives and so few abandoned husbands. Theresa doesn't really care for her husband; love that isn't mutual isn't love. So she'd come up smiling for a second husband."

"She's certainly vain," said Del. "Losing him would all but kill her."

"Not if it's done tactfully," replied Madelene. "Ross'll no doubt be glad to sacrifice his own vanity and so arrange matters that she'll be able to say and feel that she got rid of him, not he of her. Of course that means a large sacrifice of his vanity—and of yours, too. But neither of you will mind that."

Adelaide looked uncomfortable; Madelene took advantage of her abstraction to smile at the confession hinted in that look.

"As for Dory——"

At that name Del colored and hung her head.

"As for Dory," repeated Madelene, not losing the chance to emphasize the effect, "he's no doubt fond of you. But no matter what he—or you—may imagine, his fondness cannot be deeper than that of a man for a woman between whom and him there isn't the perfect love that makes one of two."

"I don't understand his caring for me," cried Del. "I can't believe he does." This in the hope of being contradicted.

But Madelene simply said: "Perhaps he'd not feel toward you as he seems to think he does if he hadn't known you before you went East and got fond of the sort of thing that

attracts you in Ross Whitney. Anyhow, Dory's the kind of man to be less unhappy over losing you than over keeping you when you didn't want to stay. You may be like his eyes to him, but you know if that sort of man loses his sight he puts seeing out of the calculation and goes on just the same. Dory Hargrave is a *man*; and a real man is bigger than any love affair, however big."

Del was trying to hide the deep and smarting wound to her vanity. "You are right, Madelene," said she. "Dory *is* cold."

"But I didn't say that," replied Madelene. "Most of us prefer people like those flabby sea creatures that are tossed aimlessly about by the waves and have no permanent shape or real purposes and desires, but take whatever their feeble tentacles can hold without effort." Del winced, and it was the highest tribute to Dr. Madelene's skill that the patient did not hate her and refuse further surgery. "We're used to that sort," continued she. "So when a really alive, vigorous, pushing, and resisting personality comes in contact with us, we say, 'How hard! How unfeeling!' The truth, of course, is that Ross is more like the flabby things—his environment dominates him, while Dory dominates his environment. But you like the Ross sort, and you're right to suit yourself. To suit yourself is the only way to avoid making a complete failure of life. Wait till Dory comes home. Then talk it out with him. Then—free yourself and marry Ross, who will have freed himself. It's quite simple. People are broad-minded about divorce nowadays. It never causes serious scandal, except among those who'd like to do the same, but don't dare."

It certainly was easy, and ought to have been attractive. Yet Del was not attracted. "One can't deal with love in such a cold, calculating fashion," thought she, by way of bolstering up her weakening confidence in the reality and depth of those sensations which had seemed so thrillingly romantic an hour before. "I've given you the impression that Ross and I have some—some understanding," said she. "But we haven't. For all I know, he may not care for me as I care for him."

"He probably doesn't," was Madelene's douchelike reply. "You attract him physically—which includes his feeling that you'd show off better than Theresa before the world for which he cares so much. But, after all, that's much the way you care for him, isn't it?"

Adelaide's bosom was swelling and falling agitatedly. Her eyes flashed; her reserve vanished. "I'm sure he'd love me!" cried she. "He'd give me what my whole soul, my whole body cry out for. Madelene, you don't understand! I am so starved, so out in the cold! I want to go in where it's warm —and—human!" The truth, the deep-down truth, was out at last; Adelaide had wrenched it from herself.

"And Dory will not give you that?" said Madelene, all gentleness and sympathy, and treading softly on this dangerous, delicate ground.

"He gives me nothing!" exclaimed Adelaide bitterly. "He is waiting for me to learn to love him. He ought to know that a woman has to be taught to love—at least the sort of woman I am. He treats me as if I were his equal, when he ought to see that I'm not; that I'm like a child, and have to be shown what's good for me, and *made* to take it."

"Then, perhaps, after all," said Madelene slowly, "you do care for Dory."

"Of course I care for him; how could anyone help it? But he won't let me—he won't let me!" She was on the verge of hysteria, and her loss of self-control was aggravated by the feeling that she was making a weak, silly exhibition of herself.

"If you do care for Dory, and Dory cares for you, and you don't care for Ross—" began Madelene.

"But I do care for Ross, too! Oh, I must be bad—bad! Could a nice woman care for two men at the same time?"

"I'd have said not," was Madelene's answer. "But now I see that she could—and I see why."

"Dory means something to me that Ross does not. Ross means something that Dory does not. I want it all—all that both of them represent. I can't give up Dory; I can't give

up Ross. You don't understand, Madelene, because you've had the good luck to get it all from Arthur."

After a silence, Madelene said: "Well, Del, what are you going to do?"

"Nothing."

"That's sensible!" approved Madelene. "If Ross really loves you, then, whether he can have you or not, he'll free himself from Theresa. He simply couldn't go on with her. And if you really care for him, then, when Dory comes home he'll free you."

"That ought to be so," said Adelaide, not seeing the full meaning of Madelene's last words. "But it isn't. Neither Ross nor I is strong enough. We're just ordinary people, the sort that most everybody is and that most everybody despises when they see them or read about them as they really are. No, he and I will each do the conventional thing. We'll go our separate ways"—contemptuously—"the *easiest* ways. And we'll regard ourselves as martyrs to duty—that's how they put it in the novels, isn't it?"

"At least," said Madelene, with a calmness she was far from feeling, "both you and Ross have had your lesson in the consequence of doing things in a hurry."

"That's the only way people brought up as we've been ever do anything. If we don't act on impulse, we don't act at all; we drift on."

"Drifting is action, the most decisive kind of action." Madelene was again thinking what would surely happen the instant Dory found how matters stood; but she deemed it tactful to keep this thought to herself. Just then she was called to the telephone. When she came back she found Adelaide restored to her usual appearance—the fashionable, light-hearted, beautiful woman, mistress of herself, and seeming as secure against emotional violence from within as against discourtesy from without. But she showed how deep was the impression of Madelene's common-sense analysis of her romance by saying: "A while ago you said there were only three serious ills, disease and death, but you didn't name the third. What is it?"

"Dishonor," said Madelene, with a long, steady look at her.

Adelaide paled slightly, but met her sister-in-law's level gaze. "Yes," was all she said.

A silence; then Madelene: "Your problem, Del, is simple; is no problem at all, so far as Dory or Ross's wife is concerned; or the whole outside world, for that matter. It's purely personal; it's altogether the problem of bringing pain and shame on yourself. The others'll get over it; but can you?"

Del made no reply. A moment later Arthur came; after dinner she left before he did, and so was not alone with Madelene again. Reviewing her amazing confessions to her sister-in-law, she was both sorry and not sorry. Her mind was undoubtedly relieved, but at the price of showing to another her naked soul, and that other a woman—true, an unusual woman, by profession a confessor, but still a woman. Thenceforth some one other than herself would know her as she really was —not at all the nice, delicate lady with instincts as fine as those of the heroines of novels, who, even at their most realistic, are pictured as fully and grandly dressed of soul in the solitude of bedroom as in crowded drawing-room. "I don't care!" concluded Adelaide. "If she, or anyone, thinks the worse of me for being a human being, it will show either hypocrisy or ignorance of human nature."

CHAPTER XXV

MAN AND GENTLEMAN

A FEW evenings later, Del, in a less strained, less despondent frame of mind, coming home from supper at her mother's, found Estelle Wilmot on the front veranda talking with Lorry Tague. She had seen this same sight perhaps half-a-dozen times since Estelle and Arden had come to stop with her at the Villa d'Orsay. On this particular evening his manner toward Estelle was no different from what it had been the other times; yet, as Del approached them, she felt the electric atmosphere which so often envelops two who love each other, and betrays their secret carefully guarded behind formal manner and indifferent look and tone. She wondered that she had been blind to what was now obvious.

"Well, Arthur has at last compelled you to go to work," said she smilingly to the big cooper with the waving tawny hair and the keen, kind gray eyes. Then, to show her respect for the secret, she said to Estelle, "Perhaps he hasn't told you that he was made superintendent of the cooperage to-day?"

Estelle blushed a little, her eyes dancing. "He was just telling me," replied she.

"I understand why you yielded," continued Adelaide to Lorry. "Arthur has been showing me the plans for the new factories. Gardens all round, big windows, high ceilings, everything done by electricity, no smoke or soot, a big swimming pool for winter or summer, a big restaurant, dressing rooms—everything! Who'd have believed that work could be carried on in such surroundings?"

"It's about time, isn't it," said Lorry, in his slow, musical

voice, "that idleness was deprived of its monopoly of comforts and luxuries?"

"How sensible that is!" said Del admiringly. "Yet nobody thinks of it."

"Why," Lorry went on, "the day'll come when they'll look back on the way we work nowadays, as we do on the time when a lot of men never went out to work except in chains and with keepers armed with lashes. The fellows that call Dory and Arthur crazy dreamers don't realize what ignorant savages they themselves are."

"They have no imagination," said Estelle.

"No imagination," echoed Lorry. "That's the secret of the stupidity and the horror of change, and of the notion that the way a thing's done to-day is the way it'll always be done."

"I'm afraid Arthur is going to get himself into even deeper trouble when these new plans are announced," said Del.

Arthur's revolution had already inflamed the other manufacturers at Saint X against him. Huge incomes were necessary to the support of their extravagant families and to the increase of the fortunes they were piling up "to save their children from fear of want"—as if that same "fear of want" were not the only known spur to the natural lethargy of the human animal! They explained to their workmen that the university industries were not business enterprises at all, and therefore must not be confused and compared with enterprises that were "practical"; but the workmen fixed tenaciously upon the central fact that the university's men worked at mechanical labor fewer hours each day by four to seven, and even eight, got higher wages, got more out of life in every way. Nor was there any of the restraint and degradation of the "model town." The workers could live and act as they pleased; it was by the power of an intelligent public opinion that Arthur was inducing his fellows and their families to build for themselves attractive homes, to live in tasteful comfort, to acquire sane habits of eating, drinking, and personal appearance. And no one was more amazed than himself at the swiftness with which the overwhelming majority responded to the opportunity.

Small wonder that the other manufacturers, who at best never went beyond the crafty, inexpensive schemes of benevolent charity, were roaring against the university as a "hotbed of anarchy."

At Adelaide's suggestion of the outburst that would follow the new and still more "inflammatory" revolution, Lorry shrugged his shoulders and laughed easily. "Nobody need worry for that brother of yours, Mrs. Hargrave," said he. "There may be some factories for sale cheap before many years. If so, the university can buy them in and increase its usefulness. Dory and Arthur are going to have a university that will be up to the name before they get through—one for all ages and kinds, and both sexes, and for everybody all his life long and in all his relations."

"It's a beautiful dream," said Del. She was remembering how Dory used to enlarge upon it in Paris until his eloquence made her feel that she loved him at the same time that it also gave her a chilling sense of his being far from her, too big and impersonal for so intimate and personal a thing as the love she craved. "A beautiful dream," she repeated with a sigh.

"That's the joy of life," said Estelle, "isn't it? To have beautiful dreams, and to help make them come true."

"And this one is actually coming true," said Lorry. "Wait a few years, only a few, and you'll see the discoveries of science make everything so cheap that vulgar, vain people will give up vulgarity and vanity in despair. A good many of the once aristocratic vulgarities have been cheapened into absurdity already. The rest will follow."

"Only a few years?" said Del, laughing, yet more than half-convinced.

"Use your imagination, Mrs. Hargrave," replied Lorry, in his large, good-humored way. "Don't be afraid to be sensible just because most people look on common sense as insanity. A hundred things that used to be luxuries for the king alone are now so cheap that the day-laborer has them—all in less than two lifetimes of real science! To-morrow or next day some one will discover, say, the secret of easily and cheaply

interchanging the so-called elements. Bang! the whole structure of swagger and envy will collapse!"

They all laughed, and Del went into the house. "Estelle—no woman, no matter who—could hope to get a better husband than Lorry," she was thinking. "And, now that he's superintendent, there's no reason why they shouldn't marry. What a fine thing, what an American thing, that a man with no chance at all in the start should be able to develop himself so that a girl like Estelle could—yes, and should—be proud of his love and proud to love him." She recalled how Lorry at the high school was about the most amusing of the boys, with the best natural manner, and far and away the best dancer; how he used to be invited everywhere, until excitement about fashion and "family" reached Saint X; how he was then gradually dropped until he, realizing what was the matter, haughtily "cut" all his former friends and associates. "We've certainly been racing downhill these last few years. Where the Wilmots used to be about the only silly people in town, there are scores of families now with noses in the air and eyes looking eagerly about for chances to snub. But, on the other hand, there's the university, and Arthur—and Dory." She dismissed Lorry and Estelle and Saint X's fashionable strivings and, in the library, sat down to compose a letter to Dory—no easy task in those days, when there were seething in her mind and heart so much that she longed to tell him but ought not, so much that she ought to tell but could not.

Lorry had acted as if he were about to depart, while Adelaide was there; he resumed his seat on the steps at Estelle's feet as soon as she disappeared. "I suppose I ought to go," said he, with a humorous glance up at her face with its regular features and steadfast eyes.

She ran her slim fingers through his hair, let the tips of them linger an instant on his lips before she took her hand away.

"I couldn't let you go just yet," said she slowly, absently. "This is the climax of the day. In this great, silent, dim light all my dreams—all our dreams—seem to become realities and to be trooping down from the sky to make us happy."

A pause, then he: "I can see them now." But soon he moved to rise. "It frightens me to be as happy as I am this evening. I must go, dear. We're getting bolder and bolder. First thing you know, your brother will be suspecting—and that means your mother."

"I don't seem to care any more," replied the girl. "Mother is really in much better health, and has got pretty well prepared to expect almost anything from me. She has become resigned to me as a 'working person.' Then, too, I'm thoroughly inoculated with the habit of doing as I please. I guess that's from being independent and having my own money. What a good thing money is!"

"So long as it means independence," suggested Lorry; "but not after it means dependence."

But Estelle was thinking of their future. The delay, the seemingly endless delay, made her even more impatient than it made him, as is always the case where the woman is really in love. In the man love holds the impetuosity of passion in leash; in the woman it rouses the deeper, the more enduring force of the maternal instinct—not merely the unconscious or, at most, half-conscious longing for the children that are to be, but the desire to do for the man—to look after his health, his physical comfort, to watch over and protect him; for, to the woman in love, the man seems in those humble ways less strong than she—a helpless creature, dependent on her. "It's going to be much harder to wait," said she, "now that you are superintendent and I have bought out Mrs. Hastings's share of my business."

They both laughed, but Lorry said: "It's no joke. A little too much money has made fools of as wise people as we are—many and many's the time."

"Not as wise a person as you are, and as you'll always make me be, or seem to be," replied Estelle.

Lorry pressed his big hand over hers for an instant. "Now that I've left off real work," said he, "I'll soon be able to take your hand without giving you a rough reminder of the difference between us."

He held out his hands, palms upward. They were certainly

not soft and smooth, but they more than made up in look of use and strength what they lacked in smoothness. She put her small hands one on either side of his, and they both thrilled with the keen pleasure the touch of edge of hand against edge of hand gave them. In the ends of her fingers were the marks of her needlework. He bent and kissed those slightly roughened finger ends passionately. "I love those marks!" he exclaimed. "They make me feel that we belong to each other."

"I'd be sorry to see *your* hands different," said she, her eyes shining upon his. "There are many things you don't understand about me—for instance, that it's just those marks of work that make you so dear to me. A woman may begin by liking a man because he's her ideal in certain ways, but once she really cares, she loves whatever is part of him."

In addition to the reasons she had given for feeling "bolder" about her "plebeian" lover, there was another that was the strongest of all. A few months before, a cousin of her father's had died in Boston, where he was the preacher of a most exclusive and fashionable church. He had endeared himself to his congregation by preaching one Easter Sunday a sermon called "The Badge of Birth." In it he proceeded to show from the Scriptures themselves how baseless was the common theory that Jesus was of lowly origin. "The common people heard Him gladly," cried the Rev. Eliot Wilmot, "because they instinctively felt His superiority of birth, felt the dominance of His lineage. In His veins flowed the blood of the royal house of Israel, the blood of the first anointed kings of Almighty God." And from this interesting premise the Reverend Wilmot deduced the divine intent that the "best blood" should have superior rights—leadership, respect, deference. So dear was he to his flock that they made him rich in this world's goods as well as in love and honor. The Wilmots of Saint X had had lively expectations from his estate. They thought that one holding the views eloquently set forth in "The Badge of Birth" must dedicate his fortune to restoring the dignity and splendor of the main branch of the Wilmot family. But, like all their dreams, this came to naught. His fortune went to a theological

seminary to endow scholarships and fellowships for decayed gentlemen's sons; he remembered only Verbena Wilmot. On his one visit to the crumbling, weed-choked seat of the head of the house, he had seen Verbena's wonderful hands, so precious and so useless that had she possessed rings and deigned to wear them she would not have permitted the fingers of the one hand to put them on the fingers of the other. The legacy was five thousand dollars, at four per cent., an income of two hundred dollars a year. Verbena invested the first quarterly installment in a long-dreamed-of marble reproduction of her right hand which, after years of thinking daily about the matter, she had decided was a shade more perfect than the left.

If one dim eye makes a man king among blind men—to translate to the vernacular Verbena's elegant reasoning—an income, however trifling, if it have no taint of toil, no stench of sweat upon it, makes its possessor entitled to royal consideration in a family of paupers and dead beats, degraded by harboring a breadwinner of an Estelle. No sudden recipient of a dazzling, drenching shower of wealth was ever more exalted than was Verbena, once in possession of "*my* legacy." Until the Rev. Eliot Wilmot's posthumous blessing descended upon her, the Wilmots lived together in comparative peace and loving kindness. They were all, except for their mania of genealogy, good-humored, extremely well-mannered people, courteous as much by nature as by deliberate intent. But, with the coming of the blessing, peace and friendliness in that family were at an end. Old Preston Wilmot and Arden railed unceasingly against the "traitor" Eliot; Verbena defended him. Their mother and Estelle were drawn into the battle from time to time, Estelle always against her will. Before Verbena had been a woman of property three months, she was hating her father and brother for their sneers and insults, Arden had gone back to drinking, and the old gentleman was in a savage and most ungentlemanly humor from morning until night.

Estelle, the "black sheep" ever since she began to support them by engaging in trade, drew aloof now, was at home as little as she could contrive, often ate a cold supper in the back

of her shop. She said nothing to Lorry of the family shame; she simply drew nearer to him. And out of this changed situation came, unconsciously to herself, a deep contempt for her father and her brother, a sense that she was indeed as alien as the Wilmots so often alleged, in scorn of her and her shop; Verbena's income went to buy adornments for herself, dresses that would give the hands a fitting background; Estelle's earnings went to her mother, who distributed them, the old gentleman and Arden ignoring whence and how the money came.

As Estelle and Lorry lingered on the porch of the Villa d'Orsay that August evening, alone in the universe under that vast, faintly luminous, late-twilight sky, Arden Wilmot came up the lawn. Neither Lorry nor Estelle saw or heard him until his voice, rough with drink and passion, savagely stung them with, "What the hell does *this* mean?"

Lorry dropped Estelle's hand and stood up, Estelle behind him, a restraining hand on his shoulder. Both were white to the lips; their sky, the moment before so clear and still, was now black and thunderous with a frightful storm. Estelle saw that her brother was far from sober; and the sight of his sister caressed by Lorry Tague would have maddened him even had he not touched liquor. She darted between the two men. "Don't be a goose, Arden," she panted, with a hysterical attempt to laugh.

"That fellow was touching you!" stormed Arden. "You miserable disgrace!" And he lifted his hand threateningly to her.

Lorry put his arm round her and drew her back, himself advancing. "You must be careful how you act toward the woman who is to be my wife, Mr. Wilmot," he said, afire in all his blood of the man who has the right to demand of the whole world the justice he gives it.

Arden Wilmot stared dumfounded, first at Lorry, then at Estelle. In the pause, Adelaide, drawn from the library by the sound of Arden's fury, reached the front doorway, saw the three, instantly knew the whole cause of this sudden, harsh commotion. With a twitch that was like the shaking off of a detaining

grasp, with a roar like a mortally wounded beast's, Arden recovered the use of limbs and voice. "You infernal lump of dirt!" he yelled. Adelaide saw his arm swing backward, then forward, and up—saw something bright in his hand. A flash— "O God, God!" she moaned. But she could not turn her eyes away or close them.

Lorry stood straight as a young sycamore for an instant, turned toward Estelle. "Good-by—my love!" he said softly, and fell, face downward, with his hands clasping the edge of her dress.

And Estelle—

She made no sound. Like a ghost, she knelt and took Lorry's head in her lap; with one hand against each of his cheeks she turned his head. "Lorry! Lorry!" she murmured in a heart-breaking voice that carried far through the stillness.

Arden put the revolver back in his pocket, seized her by the shoulder. "Come away from that!" he ordered roughly, and half-lifted her to her feet.

With a cry so awful that Adelaide swayed and almost swooned at hearing it, Estelle wrenched herself free, flung herself on her lover's body, buried her fingers in his hair, covered his dead face with kisses, bathed her lips in the blood that welled from his heart. Shouts and heavy, quick tramping from many directions—the tempest of murder was drawing people to its center as a cyclone sucks in leaves. Fright in Arden Wilmot's face, revealed to Adelaide in the light streaming from the big drawing-room windows. A group—a crowd—a multitude—pouring upon the lawns from every direction—swirling round Arden as he stood over the prostrate intermingled forms of his sister and her dead lover.

Then Adelaide, clinging to the door frame to steady herself, heard Arden say in a loud blustering voice: "I found this fellow insulting my sister, and I treated him as a Wilmot always treats an insult." And as the words reached her, they fired her. All her weakness, all her sense of helplessness fled.

Out of the circle came a man bearing unconscious Estelle, blood upon her face, upon her bosom, blood dripping from her

"Fell, face downward, with his hands clasping the edge of her dress."

hands. "Where shall I take her?" asked the man of Adelaide. "A doctor's been sent for."

"Into the hall—on the sofa—at the end—and watch by her," said Del, in quick, jerking tones. Her eyes were ablaze, her breath came in gusts. Without waiting to see where he went with his burden, she rushed down the broad steps and through the crowd, pushing them this way and that. She faced Arden Wilmot—not a lady, but a woman, a flaming torch of outraged human feeling.

"You lie!" she cried, and he seemed to wither before her. "You lie about him and about her! You, with the very clothes you're dressed in, the very liquor you're drunk with, the very pistol that shot him down, paid for by *her* earnings! He never offended you—not by look or word. You murdered him—I saw—heard. You murdered the man she was to marry, the man she loved—murdered him because she loved him. Look at him!"

The crowd widened its circle before the sweep of her arm. Lorry's blood-stained body came into view. His face, beautiful and, in its pale calm, stronger than life, was open to the paling sky. "There lies a man," she sobbed, and her tears were of the kind that make the fires of passion burn the fiercer. "A man any woman with a woman's heart would have been proud to be loved by. And you—you've murdered him!"

"Take care, Mrs. Hargrave," a voice whispered in her ear. "They'll lynch him."

"And why not?" she cried out. "Why should such a creature live?"

A hundred men were reaching for Arden, and from the crowd rose that hoarse, low, hideous sound which is the first deep bay of the unleashed blood-madness. "No, no!" she begged in horror, and waved them back.

"Adelaide!" gasped Arden, wrenching himself free and crouching at her feet and clinging to her skirts. "Save me! I only did my duty as a gentleman."

She looked down at him in unpitying scorn, then out at the crowd. "Hear that!" she cried, with a wild, terrible laugh.

"A gentleman! Yes, that's true—a gentleman. Saving your sister from the coarse contamination of an honest man!" Then to the men who were dragging at him: "No, I say—*no*! Let him alone! Don't touch the creature! He'll only foul your hands." And she pushed them back. "Let him live. What worse fate could he have than to be pointed at every day of a long life as the worthless drunken thing who murdered a man, and then tried to save himself by defaming his victim and his own sister?"

Under cover of her barrier of command, the constable led Arden into the house, past where his sister lay in a swoon, and by the back way got him to jail. The crowd, fascinated by her beauty, which the tempest of passion had transfigured into terrible and compelling majesty, was completely under her control. She stayed on, facing that throng of men, many of whom she knew by name, until Lorry's body was taken away. She was about to go into the house, as the crowd began quietly to disperse, when there arose a murmur that made her turn quickly toward the doors. There was Estelle, all disheveled and bloodstained. Her face was like death; her movements were like one walking in a deep sleep as she descended to the lawn and came toward them.

"Where is he? Where is he?" she wailed, pushing this way and that through the crowd, her hands outstretched, her long fair hair streaming like a bridal veil. Her feet slipped on the wet grass—where it was wet with his blood. She staggered, swayed uncertainly, fell with her arms outstretched as if the earth were he she sought. She lay there moaning—the cry of her tortured nerves alone, for her mind was unconscious.

Adelaide and Madelene, who had just come, bent to lift her. But their strength failed them and they sank to their knees in terror; for, from the silent crowd there burst a shriek: "Kill him, kill him!" And all in an instant the grounds were emptied of those thousands; and to the two women came an ever fainter but not less awful roar as the mob swept on uptown toward the jail.

Madelene was first to recover. "Let us carry her in," she said. And when the limp form was once more on the big sofa and the eyelids were trembling to unclose, she ripped open the right sleeve and thrust in the needle that gives oblivion.

Adelaide went to the window and listened. Before her in the moonlight was the place where that tempest of hate and murder had burst and raged. Once more her heart hardened in the pitiless fury of outraged mercy. A moan from Estelle stung her, and she leaned forward the better to catch the music of the mob's distant shriek. Silence for full five minutes; then a sound like that which bursts from the throats of the blood-hounds as they bury their fangs in their quarry. She gave a faint scream, covered her face. "Oh, spare him! Spare him!" she cried. And she sank to the floor in a faint, for she knew that Arden Wilmot was dead.

Adelaide took Estelle's store until Estelle came back to it, her surface calm like the smooth river that hides in its tortured bosom the deep-plunged rapids below the falls. The day after Estelle's return Adelaide began to study architecture at the university; soon she was made an instructor, with the dean delighted and not a little mystified by her energy and enthusiasm. Yet the matter was simple and natural: she had emerged from her baptism of blood and fire—a woman; at last she had learned what in life is not worth while; she was ready to learn what it has to offer that is worth while—the sole source of the joys that have no reaction, of the content that is founded upon the rock.

CHAPTER XXVI

CHARLES WHITNEY'S HEIRS

EIGHT specialists, including Romney, of New York and Saltonstal, of Chicago, had given Charles Whitney their verdicts on why he was weak and lethargic. In essential details these diagnoses differed as widely as opinions always differ where no one knows, or can know, and so everyone is free to please his own fancy in choosing a cloak for his ignorance. Some of the doctors declared kidneys sound but liver suspicious; others exonerated liver but condemned one or both kidneys; others viewed kidneys and liver with equal pessimism; still others put those organs aside and shook their heads and unlimbered their Latin at spleen and pancreas. In one respect, however, the eight narrowed to two groups. "Let's figure it out trial-balance fashion," said Whitney to his private secretary, Vagen. "Five, including two-thousand-dollar Romney, say I 'may go soon.' Three, including our one-thousand-dollar neighbor, Saltonstal, say I am 'in no immediate danger.' But what the Romneys mean by 'soon,' and what the Saltonstals mean by 'immediate,' none of the eight says."

"But they all say that 'with proper care'—" began Vagen, with the faith of the little in the pretentious.

"So they do! So they do!" interrupted Whitney, whom life had taught not to measure wisdom by profession of it, nor yet by repute for it. And he went on in a drowsy drawl, significantly different from his wonted rather explosive method of speech: "But does any of 'em say what 'proper care' is? Each gives his opinion. Eight opinions, each different and each cautioning me against the kind of 'care' prescribed by the other

seven. And I paid six thousand dollars!" A cynical smile played round his thin-lipped, sensual, selfish mouth.

"Sixty-three hundred," corrected Vagen. He never missed this sort of chance to impress his master with his passion for accuracy.

"Sixty-three, then. I'd better have given you the money to blow in on your fliers on wheat and pork."

At this Vagen looked much depressed. It was his first intimation that his chief knew about his private life. "I hope, sir, nobody has been poisoning your mind against me," said he. "I court the fullest investigation. I have been honest——"

"Of course, of course," replied Whitney. "There never was a man as timid as you are that wasn't honest. What a shallow world it is! How often envy and cowardice pass for virtue!"

"I often say, sir," replied Vagen, with intent to soothe and flatter, "there ain't one man in ten million that wouldn't have done the things you've done if they'd had the brains and the nerve."

"And pray what are the 'things I've done'?" inquired Whitney. But the flame of irritation was so feeble that it died down before his words were out. "I'm going down to Saint X to see old Schulze," he drawled on. "Schulze knows more than any of 'em—and ain't afraid to say when he don't know." A slow, somewhat sardonic smile. "That's why he's unknown. What can a wise man, who insists on showing that he's wise, expect in a world of damn fools?" A long silence during which the uncomfortable Vagen had the consolation of seeing in that haggard, baggy, pasty-white face that his master's thoughts were serving him much worse than mere discomfort. Then Whitney spoke again: "Yes, I'm going to Saint X. I'm going home to——"

He did not finish; he could not speak the word of finality. Vagen saw the look in his pale, blue-green eyes, saw that the great financier knew he would never again fling his terrible nets broadcast for vast hauls of golden fish, knew his days were numbered and that the number was small. But, instead of this

making him feel sympathetic and equal toward his master, thus unmasked as mere galvanized clay, it filled him with greater awe; for, to the Vagens, Death seems to wear a special costume and walk with grander step to summon the rich and the high.

"Yes, I'll go—this very afternoon," said Whitney more loudly, turning his face toward the door through which came a faint feminine rustling—the *froufrou* of the finest, softest silk and finest, softest linen.

He looked attentively at his wife as she crossed the threshold—looked with eyes that saw mercilessly but indifferently, the eyes of those who are out of the game of life, out for good and all, and so care nothing about it. He noted in her figure—in its solidity, its settledness—the signs of age the beauty doctors were still almost successful in keeping out of that masklike face which was their creation rather than nature's; he noted the rough-looking red of that hair whose thinness was not altogether concealed despite the elaborate care with which it was arranged to give the impression of careless abundance. He noted her hands; his eyes did not linger there, for the hands had the wrinkles and hollows and age marks which but for art would have been in the face, and they gave him a feeling—he could not have defined it, but it made him shudder. His eyes rested again upon her face, with an expression of pity that was slightly satirical. This struggle of hers seemed so petty and silly to him now; how could any human being think any other fact important when the Great Fact hung from birth threateningly over all?

"You feel worse to-day, dear?" said she, in the tones that sound carefully attuned to create an impression of sympathy. Hers had now become the mechanically saccharine voice which sardonic time ultimately fastens upon the professionally sympathetic to make them known and mocked of all, even of the vainest seekers after sympathy.

"On the contrary, I feel better," he drawled, eyes half-shut. "No pain at all. But—horribly weak, as if I were going to faint in a minute or two—and I don't give a damn for any-

thing." There was a personal fling in that last word, an insinuation that he knew her state of mind toward him, and reciprocated.

"Well, to-morrow Janet and her baby will be here," said Mrs. Whitney, and her soothing tones seemed to stimulate him by irritation. "Then we'll all go down to Saint X together, if you still wish it."

"Don't take that tone with me, I tell you!" he said with some energy in his drawl. "*Don't* talk to me as if you were hanging over my deathbed lying to me about my going to live!" And he closed his eyes, and his breath made his parted, languid lips flutter.

"Mr. Vagen," said Matilda, in her tone of sweet graciousness, "may I trouble you to go and——"

"Go to the devil, Vagen," said Charles, starting up again that slow stream of fainting words and sentences. "Anywhere to get you out of the room so you won't fill the flapping ears of your friends with gossip about Whitney and his wife. Though why she should send you out I can't understand. If you and the servants don't hear what's going on, you make up and tattle worse than what really happens."

Mrs. Whitney gave Vagen a look of sweet resignation and Vagen responded with an expression which said: "I understand. He is very ill. He is not responsible. I admire your ladylike patience." As Whitney's eyes were closed he missed this byplay.

"Here, Vagen—before you go," he drawled, waving a weary hand toward the table at his elbow. "Here's a check for ten thousand. You don't deserve it, for you've used your position to try to get rich on the sly. But inasmuch as I was 'on to' you, and dropped hints that made you lose, I've no hard feelings. Then, too, you did no worse than any other would have done in your place. A man's as good, and as bad, as he has the chance to be. So take it. I've not made my will yet, and as I may not be able to, I give you the money now. You'll find the check in this top drawer, and some other checks for the people near me. I suppose they'll expect something—I've

got 'em into the habit of it. Take 'em and run along and send 'em off right away."

Vagen muttered inarticulate thanks. In fact, the check was making small impression on him, or the revelation that his chief had eyes as keen for what was going on under his nose as for the great movements in the big field. He could think only of that terrifying weakness, that significant garrulousness.

When Vagen was out of the way, Charles repeated: "I'm going this afternoon." His listless eyes were gazing vacantly at the carved rosewood ceiling. His hands—the hands of a corpse—looked horribly like sheathed, crumpled claws in the gold silk cuffs of his dark-blue dressing gown. His nose, protruding from his sunken cheeks, seemed not like a huge beak, but indeed a beak.

"But Janet—" began Mrs. Whitney, thinking as she spoke that he surely would "not be spared to us much longer."

"Janet can follow—or stay here—or—I don't care what she does," droned Whitney. "Do you suppose I'm thinking about anybody but myself now? Would you, if you were in my fix. I should say," he amended cynically, "*will* you, when you're in my fix?"

"Charles!" exclaimed Matilda.

Whitney's smile checked her. "I'm not a fool," he rambled on. "Do you suppose I haven't seen what was going on? Do you suppose I don't know all of you wish I was out of it? Yes, out of it. And you needn't bother to put on that shocked look; it doesn't fool me. I used to say: 'I'll be generous with my family and give 'em more than they'd have if I was gone.' 'No children waiting round eager for me to pass off,' said I, 'so that they can divide up my fortune.' I've said that often and often. And I've acted on it. And I've raised up two as pampered, selfish children as ever lived. And now— The last seven months I've been losing money hand over fist. Everything I've gone into has turned out bad. I'm down to about half what I had a year ago—maybe less than half. And you and Ross—and no doubt that marchioness ex-daughter of mine—all

know it. And you're afraid if I live on, I'll lose more, maybe everything. Do you deny it?"

Matilda was unable to speak. She had known he was less rich; but half!—"maybe less!" The cuirass of steel, whalebone, kid, and linen which molded her body to a fashionable figure seemed to be closing in on her heart and lungs with a stifling clutch.

"No, you don't deny it. You couldn't," Whitney drawled on. "And so my 'indulgent father' damned foolishness ends just where I might have known it'd end. We've brought up the children to love money and show off, instead of to love us and character and self-respect— God forgive me!"

The room was profoundly silent: Charles thinking drowsily, yet vividly, too, of his life; Matilda burning in anguish over the lost half, or more, of the fortune—and Charles had always been secretive about his wealth, so she didn't know how much the fortune was a year ago and couldn't judge whether much or little was left! Enough to uphold her social position? Or only enough to keep her barely clear of the "middle class"?

Soon Whitney's voice broke in upon her torments. "I've been thinking a great deal, this last week, about Hiram Ranger."

Matilda, startled, gave him a wild look. "Charles!" she exclaimed.

"Exactly," said Whitney, a gleam of enjoyment in his dull eyes.

In fact, ever since Hiram's death his colossal figure had often dominated the thoughts of Charles and Matilda Whitney. The will had set Charles to observing, to *seeing*; it had set Matilda to speculating on the possibilities of her own husband's stealthy relentlessness. At these definite, dreadful words of his, her vague alarms burst into a deafening chorus, jangling and clanging in her very ears.

"Arthur Ranger," continued Whitney, languid and absent, "has got out of the beaten track of business——"

"Yes; look at Hiram's children!" urged Matilda. "Everybody that is anybody is down on Arthur. See what his wife has brought him to, with her crazy, upsetting ideas! They tell

me a good many of the best people in Saint X hardly speak to him. Yes, Charles, *look* at Hiram's doings."

"Thanks to Hiram—what he inherited from Hiram and what Hiram had the good sense not to let him inherit—he has become a somebody. He's doing things, and the fact that they aren't just the kind of things I like doesn't make me fool enough to underestimate them or him. Success is the test, and in his line he's a success."

"If it hadn't been for his wife he'd not have done much," said Matilda sourly.

"You've lived long enough, I'd think, to have learned not to say such shallow things," drawled he. "Of course, he has learned from her—don't everybody have to learn somewhere? Where a man learns is nothing; the important thing is his capacity to learn. If a man's got the capacity to learn, he'll learn, he'll become somebody. If he hasn't, then no man nor no woman can teach him. No, my dear, you may be sure that anybody who amounts to anything has got it in himself. And Arthur Ranger is a credit to any father. He's becoming famous—the papers are full of what he's accomplishing. And he's respected, honest, able, with a wife that loves him. Would he have been anybody if his father had left him the money that would have compelled him to be a fool? As for the girl, she's got a showy streak in her—she's your regular American woman of nowadays—the kind of daughter your sort of mother and my sort of damn-fool father breed up. But Del's mother wasn't like you, Mattie, and she hadn't a fool father like me, so she's married to a young fellow that's already doing big things, in his line—and a good line his is, a better line than trimming dollars and donkeys. Our Jenny—Jane that used to be— We've sold her to a Frenchman, and she's sold herself to the devil. Hiram's daughter— God forgive us, Matilda, for what we've done to Janet." All this, including that last devout appeal, in the manner of a spectator of a scene at which he is taking a last, indifferent, backward glance as he is leaving.

His wife's brain was too busy making plans and tearing

them up to follow his monotonous garrulity except in a general way. He waited in vain for her to defend her daughter and herself.

"As for Ross," he went on, "he's keen and quick enough. He's got together quite a fortune of his own—and he'll hold on to it and get more. It's easy enough to make money if you've got money—and ain't too finicky about the look and the smell of the dollars before you gulp 'em down. Your Ross has a good strong stomach that way—as good as his father's—and mother's. But— He ain't exactly the man I used to picture as I was wheeling him up and down the street in his baby carriage in Saint X."

That vulgar reminiscence seemed to be the signal for which Matilda was waiting. "Charles Whitney," she said, "you and I have brought up our children to take their proper place in our aristocracy of wealth and birth and breeding. And I know you're not going to undo what we've done, and done well."

"That's your 'bossy' tone, Mattie," he drawled, his desire to talk getting a fresh excuse for indulging itself. "I guess this is a good time to let you into a secret. You've thought you ran me ever since we were engaged. That delusion of yours nearly lost you the chance to lead these thirty years of wedded bliss with me. If you hadn't happened to make me jealous and afraid the one man I used to envy in those days would get you— I laughed the other day when he was appointed postmaster at Indianapolis— However, I did marry you, and did let you imagine you wore the pants. It seemed to amuse you, and it certainly amused me—though not in the same way. Now I want you to look back and think hard. You can't remember a single time that what you bossed me to do was ever done. I was always fond of playing tricks and pulling secret wires, and I did a lot of it in making you think you were bossing me when you were really being bossed."

It was all Mrs. Whitney could do to keep her mind on how sick he was, and how imperative it was not to get him out of humor. "I never meant to try to influence you, Charles," she

said, "except as anyone tries to help those about one. And certainly you've been the one that has put us all in our present position. That's why it distressed me for you even to talk of undoing your work."

Whitney smiled satirically, mysteriously. "I'll do what I think best," was all he replied. And presently he added, "though I don't feel like doing anything. It seems to me I don't care what happens, or whether I live—or—don't. I'll go to Saint X. I'm just about strong enough to stand the trip —and have Schulze come out to Point Helen this evening."

"Why not save your strength and have him come here?" urged Matilda.

"He wouldn't," replied her husband. "Last time I saw him he looked me over and said: 'Champagne. If you don't stop it you won't live. Don't come here again unless you cut out that poison.' But I never could resist champagne. So I told myself he was an old crank, and found a great doctor I could hire to agree with me. No use to send for Schulze to come all this distance. I might even have to go to his office if I was at Saint X. He won't go to see anybody who's able to move about. 'As they want *me*, let 'em come *to* me, just as I'd go to them if I wanted them,' he says. 'The air they get on the way is part of the cure.' Besides, he and I had a quarrel. He was talking his nonsense against religion, and I said something, and he implied I wasn't as straight in business as I should be—quoted something about 'He that hasteth to be rich shall not be innocent,' and one thing led to another, and finally he said, with that ugly jeer of his: 'You pious bandits are lucky to have a forgiving God to go to. Now we poor devils have only our self-respect, and *it* never forgives anything.'" Whitney laughed, reflected, laughed again. "Yes, I must see Schulze. Maybe— Anyhow, I'm going to Saint X —going home, or as near home as anything my money has left me."

He drowsed off. She sat watching him—the great beak, the bulging forehead, the thin, cruel lips; and everywhere in the garden of artificial flowers which formed the surface of her

nature, hiding its reality even from herself, there appeared the poisonous snakes of hateful thoughts to shoot their fangs and hiss at him. She shrank and shuddered; yet— "It's altogether his own fault that I feel this way toward him as he lies dying," she said to herself, resorting to human nature's unfailing, universally sought comforter in all trying circumstances—self-excuse. "He always was cold and hard. He has become a monster. And even in his best days he wasn't worthy to have such a woman as I am. And now he is thinking of cheating me—and will do it—unless God prevents him."

He drowsed on, more asleep than awake, not even rousing when they put him to bed. He did not go to Saint X that day. But he did go later—went to lie in state in the corridor of the splendid hall he had given Tecumseh; to be gaped at by thousands who could not see that they were viewing a few pounds of molded clay, so busy were their imaginations with the vast fortune it was supposed he left; to be preached over, the sermon by Dr. Hargrave, who believed in him—and so, in estimating the man as distinguished from what the system he lived under had made of him, perhaps came nearer the truth than those who talked only of the facts of his public career—his piracy, his bushwhacking, his gambling with the marked cards and loaded dice of "high finance"; to be buried in the old Cedar Grove Cemetery, with an imposing monument presently over him, before it fresh flowers every day for a year—the Marchioness of St. Berthè contracted with a florist to attend to that.

Four days after the funeral Janet sent a servant down to Adelaide and to Mrs. Ranger with notes begging them to come to Point Helen for lunch. "We are lonely and *so* dreary," she wrote Adelaide. "We want you—need you." Only one answer was possible, and at half-past twelve they set out in Mrs. Ranger's carriage. As they drove away from the Villa d'Orsay Mrs. Ranger said: "When does Mrs. Dorsey allow to come home?"

"Not for two years more," replied Del.

Ellen's expression suggested that she was debating whether or not to speak some thought which she feared Del might regard as meddlesome. "When you finally do have to get out," she said presently, "it'll be like giving up your own home, won't it?"

"No," said Del. "I hate the place!" A pause, then: "I wrote Mrs. Dorsey yesterday that we wouldn't stay but three months longer—not in any circumstances."

The old woman's face brightened. "I'm mighty glad of that," she said heartily. "Then, you'll have a home of your own at last."

"Not exactly," was Del's reply, in a curious tone. "The fact is, I'm going to live with Dr. Hargrave."

Ellen showed her astonishment. "And old Martha Skeffington!"

"She's not so difficult, once you get to know her," replied Del. "I find that everything depends on the point of view you take in looking at people. I've been getting better acquainted with Dory's aunt the last few weeks. I think she has begun to like me. We'll get along."

"Don't you think you'd better wait till Dory gets back?"

"No," said Adelaide firmly, a look in her eyes which made her mother say to herself: "There's the Ranger in her."

They drove in silence awhile; then Del, with an effort which brought a bright color to her cheeks, began: "I want to tell you, mother, that I went to Judge Torrey this morning, and made over to you the income father left me."

"Whatever did you do *that* for?" cried Ellen, turning in the seat to stare at her daughter through her glasses.

"I promised Dory I would. I've spent some of the money —about fifteen hundred dollars— You see, the house was more expensive than I thought. But everything's paid up now."

"I don't need it, and don't want it," said Ellen. "And I won't take it!"

"I promised Dory I would—before we were married. He thinks I've done it. I've let him think so. And—lately—

I've been having a sort of house cleaning—straightening things up—and I straightened that up, too."

Ellen Ranger understood. A long pause, during which she looked lovingly at her daughter's beautiful face. At last she said: "No, there don't seem to be no other way out of it." Then, anxiously, "You ain't written Dory what you've done?"

"No," replied Del. "Not yet."

"Not never!" exclaimed her mother. "That's one of the things a body mustn't ever tell anyone. You did wrong; you've done right—and it's all settled and over. He'd probably understand if you told him. But he'd never quite trust you the same again—that's human nature."

"But *you'd* trust me," objected Del.

"I'm older'n Dory," replied her mother; "and, besides, I ain't your husband. There's no end of husbands and wives that get into hot water through telling, where it don't do any earthly good and makes the other one uneasy and unhappy."

Adelaide reflected. "It *is* better not to tell him," she concluded.

Ellen was relieved. "That's common sense," said she. "And you can't use too much common sense in marriage. The woman's got to have it, for the men never do where women are concerned." She reflected a few minutes, then, after a keen glance at her daughter and away, she said with an appearance of impersonality that evidenced diplomatic skill of no mean order: "And there's this habit the women are getting nowadays of always peeping into their heads and hearts to see what's going on. How can they expect the cake to bake right if they're first at the fire door, then at the oven door, openin' and shuttin' 'em, peepin' and pokin' and tastin'—that's what *I'd* like to know."

Adelaide looked at her mother's apparently unconscious face in surprise and admiration. "What a sensible, wonderful woman you are, Ellen Ranger!" she exclaimed, giving her mother the sisterly name she always gave her when she felt a particular delight in the bond between them. And half to

herself, yet so that her mother heard, she added: "And what a fool your daughter has been!"

"Nobody's born wise," said Ellen, "and mighty few takes the trouble to learn."

At Point Helen the mourning livery of the lodge keeper and of the hall servants prepared Ellen and her daughter for the correct and elegant habiliments of woe in which Matilda and her son and daughter were garbed. If Whitney had died before he began to lose his fortune, and while his family were in a good humor with him because of his careless generosity, or, rather, indifference to extravagance, he would have been mourned as sincerely as it is possible for human beings to mourn one by whose death they are to profit enormously in title to the material possessions they have been trained to esteem above all else in the world. As it was, those last few months of anxiety—Mrs. Whitney worrying lest her luxury and social leadership should be passing, Ross exasperated by the daily struggle to dissuade his father from fatuous enterprises—had changed Whitney's death from a grief to a relief. However, "appearances" constrained Ross to a decent show of sorrow, compelled Mrs. Whitney to a still stronger exhibit. Janet, who in far-away France had not been touched by the financial anxieties, felt a genuine grief that gave her an admirable stimulus to her efflorescent oversoul. She had "prepared for the worst," had brought from Paris a marvelous mourning wardrobe—dresses and hats and jewelry that set off her delicate loveliness as it had never been set off before. She made of herself an embodiment, an apotheosis, rather, of poetic woe—and so, roused to emulation her mother's passion for pose. Ross had refused to gratify them even to the extent of taking a spectator's part in their refined theatricals. The coming of Mrs. Ranger and Adelaide gave them an audience other than servile; they proceeded to strive to rise to the opportunity. The result of this struggle between mother and daughter was a spectacle so painful that even Ellen, determined to see only sincerity, found it impossible not to suspect a grief that could find so much and such language in which to vent itself. She

fancied she appreciated why Ross eyed his mother and sister with unconcealed hostility and spoke almost harshly when they compelled him to break his silence.

Adelaide hardly gave the two women a thought. She was surprised to find that she was looking at Ross and thinking of him quite calmly and most critically. His face seemed to her trivial, with a selfishness that more than suggested meanness, the eyes looking out from a mind which habitually entertained ideas not worth a real man's while. What was the matter with him—"or with me?" What is he thinking about? Why is he looking so mean and petty? Why had he no longer the least physical attraction for her? Why did her intense emotions of a few brief weeks ago seem as vague as an unimportant occurrence of many years ago? What had broken the spell? She could not answer her own puzzled questions; she simply knew that it was so, that any idea that she did, or ever could, love Ross Whitney was gone, and gone forever. "It's so," she thought. "What's the difference why? Shall I never learn to let the stove doors alone?"

As soon as lunch was over Matilda took Ellen to her boudoir and Ross went away, leaving Janet and Adelaide to walk up and down the shaded west terrace with its vast outlook upon the sinuous river and the hills. To draw Janet from the painful theatricals, she took advantage of a casual question about the lynching, and went into the details of that red evening as she had not with anyone. It was now almost two months into the past; but all Saint X was still feverish from it, and she herself had only begun again to have unhaunted and unbroken sleep. While she was relating Janet forgot herself; but when the story was told—all of it except Adelaide's own part; that she entirely omitted—Janet went back to her personal point of view. "A beautiful love story!" she exclaimed. "And right here in prosaic Saint X!"

"Is it Saint X that is prosaic," said Adelaide, "or is it we, in failing to see the truth about familiar things?"

"Perhaps," replied Janet, in the tone that means "not at all." To her a thrill of emotion or a throb of pain felt by a

titled person differed from the same sensation in an untitled person as a bar of supernal or infernal music differs from the whistling of a farm boy on his way to gather the eggs; if the title was royal—Janet wept when an empress died of a cancer and talked of her "heroism" for weeks.

"Of course," she went on musingly, to Adelaide, "it was very beautiful for Lorry and Estelle to love each other. Still, I can't help feeling that— At least, I can understand Arden Wilmot's rage. After all, Estelle stepped out of her class; didn't she, Del?"

"Yes," said Del, not recognizing the remark as one she herself might have made not many months before. "Both she and Lorry stepped out of their classes, and into the class where there is no class, but only just men and women, hearts and hands and brains." She checked herself just in time to refrain from adding, "the class our fathers and mothers belonged in."

Janet did not inquire into the mystery of this. "And Estelle has gone to live with poor Lorry's mother!" said she. "How noble and touching! Such beautiful self-sacrifice!"

"Why self-sacrifice?" asked Del, irritated. "She couldn't possibly go home, could she? And she is fond of Lorry's mother."

"Yes, of course. No doubt she's a dear, lovely old woman. But—a washerwoman, and constant, daily contact—and not as lady and servant, but on what must be, after all, a sort of equality—" Janet finished her sentence with a ladylike look.

Adelaide burned with the resentment of the new convert. "A woman who brought into the world and brought up such a son as Lorry was," said she, "needn't yield to anybody." Then the silliness of arguing such a matter with Madame la Marquise de Saint Berthè came over her. "You and I don't look at life from the same standpoint, Janet," she added, smiling. "You see, you're a lady, and I'm not—any more."

"Oh, yes, you are," Janet, the devoid of the sense of humor, hastened to assure her earnestly. "You know we in France don't feel as they do in America, that one gets or loses caste when one gets or loses money. Besides, Dory is in a profes-

sion that is quite aristocratic, and those lectures he delivered at Göttingen are really talked about everywhere on the other side."

But Adelaide refused to be consoled. "No, I'm not a lady—not what you'd call a lady, even as a Frenchwoman."

"Oh, but *I*'m a good American!" Janet protested, suddenly prudent and rushing into the pretenses our transplanted and acclimatized sisters are careful to make when talking with us of the land whence comes their sole claim to foreign aristocratic consideration—their income. "I'm really quite famous for my Americanism. I've done a great deal toward establishing our ambassador at Paris in the best society. Coming from a republic and to a republic that isn't recognized by our set in France, he was having a hard time, though he and his wife are all right at home. Now that there are more gentlemen in authority at Washington, our diplomats are of a much better class than they used to be. Everyone over there says so. Of course, you—that is we, are gradually becoming civilized and building up an aristocracy."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Adelaide, feeling that she must change the subject or show her exasperation, yet unable to find any subject which Janet would not adorn with refined and cultured views. "Isn't Ross, there, looking for you?"

He had just rushed from the house, his face, his manner violently agitated. As he saw Adelaide looking at him, he folded and put in his pocket a letter which seemed to be the cause of his agitation. When the two young women came to where he was standing, he joined them and walked up and down with them, his sister, between him and Del, doing all the talking. Out of the corner of her eye Del saw that his gaze was bent savagely upon the ground and that his struggle for self-control was still on. At the first opportunity she said: "I must get mother. We'll have to be going."

"Oh, no, not yet," urged Janet, sincerity strong in her affected accents. Del felt that the sister, for some reason, as strongly wished not to be left alone with the brother as the brother wished to be left alone with the sister. In confirma-

tion of this, Janet went on to say: "Anyhow, Ross will tell your mother."

Ross scowled at his sister, made a hesitating, reluctant movement toward the steps; just then Matilda and Ellen appeared. Adelaide saw that her mother had succeeded in getting through Matilda's crust of sham and in touch with her heart. At sight of her son Mrs. Whitney's softened countenance changed—hardened, Adelaide thought—and she said to him eagerly: "Any news, any letters?"

"This," answered Ross explosively. He jerked the letter from his pocket, gave it to his mother.

"You'll excuse me—Ellen—Adelaide," said Matilda, as she unfolded the paper with fingers that trembled. "This is very important." Silence, as she read, her eager glance leaping along the lines. Her expression became terrible; she burst out in a voice that was both anger and despair: "No will! He wasn't just trying to torment me when he said he hadn't made one. No will! Nothing but the draft of a scheme to leave everything to Tecumseh—there's your Hiram's work, Ellen!"

Adelaide's gentle pressure on her mother's arm was unnecessary; it was too evident that Matilda, beside herself, could not be held responsible for anything she said. There was no pretense, no "oversoul" in her emotion now. She was as different from the Matilda of the luncheon table as the swollen and guttered face of woe in real life is different from the graceful tragedy of the stage.

"No will; what of it?" said Ellen gently. "It won't make the least difference. There's just you and the children."

Adelaide, with clearer knowledge of certain dark phases of human nature and of the Whitney family, hastily interposed. "Yes, we must go," said she. "Good-by, Mrs. Whitney," and she put out her hand.

Mrs. Whitney neither saw nor heard. "Ellen!" she cried, her voice like her wild and haggard face. "What do you think of such a daughter as mine here? Her father——"

Janet, with eyes that dilated and contracted strangely, in-

terrupted with a sweet, deprecating, "Good-by, Adelaide dear. As I told you, I am leaving to-night——"

There Ross laid his hand heavily on Janet's shoulder. "You are going to stay, young lady," he said between his teeth, "and hear what your mother has to say about you." His voice made Adelaide shudder, even before she saw the black hate his eyes were hurling at his sister.

"Yes, we want you, Ellen, and you, Del, to know her as she is," Mrs. Whitney now raged on. "When she married, her father gave her a dowry, bought that title for her—paid as much as his whole fortune now amounts to. He did it solely because I begged him to. She knows the fight I had to win him over. And now that he's gone, without making a will, she says she'll have her *legal* rights! Her *legal* rights! She'll take *one-third* of what he left. She'll rob her brother and her mother!"

Janet was plainly reminding herself that she must not forget that she was a lady and a marchioness. In a manner in which quiet dignity was mingled with a delicate soul's shrinking from such brawling vulgarity as this that was being forced upon her, she said, looking at Adelaide: "Papa never intended that my dowry should be taken out of my share. It was a present." She looked calmly at her mother. "Just like your jewels, mamma." She turned her clear, luminous eyes upon Ross. "Just like the opportunities he gave you to get your independent fortune."

Mrs. Whitney, trembling so that she could scarcely articulate, retorted: "At the time he said, and I told you, it was to come out of your share. And how you thanked me and kissed me and—" She stretched toward Ellen her shaking old woman's hands, made repellent by the contrasting splendor of magnificent black pearl rings. "O Ellen, Ellen!" she quavered. "I think my heart will burst!"

"You did *say* he said so," replied Janet softly, "but *he* never told *me*."

"You—you—" stuttered Ross, flinging out his arms at her in a paroxysm of fury.

"I refuse to discuss this any further," said Janet, drawing herself up in the full majesty of her black-robed figure and turning her long shapely back on Ross. "Mrs. Ranger, I'm sure you and Del realize that mother and Ross are terribly upset, and not——"

"They'll realize that you are a cheat, a vulture in the guise of woman!" cried Mrs. Whitney. "Ellen, tell her what she is!"

Mrs. Ranger, her eyes down and her face expressing her agonized embarrassment, contrived to say: "You mustn't bring me in, Mattie. Adelaide and I must go."

"No, you *shall* hear!" shrieked Mrs. Whitney, barring the way. "All the world shall hear how this treacherous, ingrate daughter of mine—oh, the sting of that!—how she purposes to steal, yes, steal four times as much of her father's estate as Ross or I get. Four times as much! I can't believe the law allows it! But whether it does or not, Janet Whitney, *God* won't allow it! God will hear my cry, my curse on you."

"My conscience is clear," said Janet, and her gaze, spiritual, exalted, patient, showed that she spoke the truth, that her mother's looks and words left her quite unscathed.

Ross vented a vicious, jeering laugh. His mother, overcome with the sense of helplessness, collapsed from rage to grief and tears. She turned to Mrs. Ranger. "Your Hiram was right," she wailed, "and my Charles said so just before he went. Look at my daughter, Ellen. Look at my son—for he, too, is robbing me. He has his own fortune that his dead father made for him; yet he, too, talks about his legal rights. He demands his full third!"

Adelaide did not look at Ross; yet she was seeing him inside and out, the inside through the outside.

"My heartless children!" sobbed Matilda. "I can't believe that they are the same I brought into the world and watched over and saw that they had everything. God forgive them—and me. Your Hiram was right. Money has done it. Money has made monsters of them. And I—oh, how I am punished!"

All this time Ellen and Adelaide had been gradually retreating, the Whitneys following them. When Mrs. Whitney at last opened wide the casket of her woe and revealed Ross there, too, he wheeled on Adelaide with a protesting, appealing look. He was confident that he was in the right, that his case was different from Janet's; confident also that Adelaide would feel that in defending his rights he was also defending hers that were to be. But before Del there had risen the scene after the reading of her own father's will. She recalled her rebellious thoughts, saw again Arthur's fine face distorted by evil passions, heard again her mother's terrible, just words: "Don't trample on your father's grave, Arthur Ranger! I'll put you both out of the house! Go to the Whitneys, where you belong!" And then she saw Arthur as he now was, and herself the wife of Dory Hargrave. And she for the first time realized, as we realize things only when they have become an accepted and unshakable basic part of our lives, what her father had done, what her father was. Hiram had won his daughter.

"We are going now," said Ellen, coming from the stupor of shame and horror into which this volcanic disgorging of the secret minds and hearts of the Whitneys had plunged her. And the expression she fixed first upon Janet, then upon Ross, then upon Matilda, killed any disposition they might have had to try to detain her. As she and Adelaide went toward her carriage, Ross followed. Walking beside Adelaide, he began to protest in a low tone and with passionate appeal against the verdict he could not but read in her face. "It isn't fair, it isn't just!" he pleaded. "Adelaide, hear me! Don't misjudge me. You know what your—your good opinion means to me."

She took her mother's arm, and so drew farther away from him.

"Forgive me," he begged. "Janet put me out of my mind. It drove me mad to have her rob—*us*."

At that "us" Adelaide fixed her gaze on his for an instant. And what he saw in her eyes silenced him—silenced him on one subject forever.

He left for Chicago without seeing either his sister or his mother again. His impulse was to renounce to his mother his share of his father's estate. But one does not act hastily upon an impulse to give up nearly a million dollars. On reflection he decided against such expensive and futile generosity. If it would gain him Adelaide—then, yes. But when it would gain him nothing but the applause of people who in the same circumstances would not have had even the impulse to forego a million— "Mother's proper share will give her as much of an income as a woman needs at her age and alone," reasoned he. "Besides, she may marry again. And I must not forget that but for her Janet would never have got that dowry. She brought this upon herself. Her folly has cost me dearly enough. If I go away to live abroad or in New York—anywhere to be free of the Howlands—why I'll need all I've got properly to establish myself."

Janet and her baby left on a later train for the East. Before going she tried to see her mother. Her mother had wronged her in thought, had slandered her in word; but Janet forgave her and nobly wished her to have the consolation of knowing it. Mrs. Whitney, however, prevented the execution of this exalted purpose by refusing to answer the gentle persistent knocking and gentle appealing calls of "Mother, mother dear!" at her locked boudoir door.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE DOOR AJAR

UDGE TORREY succeeded Whitney as chairman of the overseers of Tecumseh and in the vacant trusteeship of the Ranger bequest. Soon Dr. Hargrave, insisting that he was too old for the labors of the presidency of such a huge and varied institution as the university had become, was made honorary president, and his son, still in Europe, was elected chairman of the faculty. Toward the middle of a fine afternoon in early September Dr. Hargrave and his daughter-in-law drove to the railway station in the ancient and roomy phaeton which was to Saint X as much part of his personality as the aureole of glistening white hair that framed his majestic head, or as the great plaid shawl that had draped his big shoulders with their student stoop every winter day since anyone could remember. Despite his long exposure to the temptation to sink into the emasculate life of unapplied intellect, mere talker and writer, and to adopt that life's flabby ideals, he had remained the man of ideas, the man of action. His learning was all but universal, yet he had the rugged, direct vigor of the man of affairs. His was not the knowledge that enfeebles, but the knowledge that empowers. As his son, the new executive of the university—with the figure of a Greek athlete, with positive character, will as well as intellect, stamped upon his young face—appeared in the crowd, the onlookers had the sense that a "somebody" had arrived. Dory's always was the air an active mind never fails to give; as Judge Torrey once said: "You've only got to look at him to see he's the kind that does things, not the kind that tells

how they used to be done or how they oughtn't to be done." Now there was in his face and bearing the subtly but surely distinguishing quality that comes only with the strength a man gets when his fellows acknowledge his leadership, when he has seen the creations of his brain materialize in work accomplished. Every successful man has this look, and shows it according to his nature—the arrogant arrogantly; the well-balanced with tranquil unconsciousness.

As he moved toward his father and Adelaide, her heart swelled with pride in him, with pride in her share in him. Ever since the sending of the cablegram to recall him, she had been wondering what she would feel at sight of him. Now she forgot all about her once-beloved self-analysis. She was simply proud of him, enormously proud; other men seemed trivial beside this personage. Also she was a little afraid; for, as their eyes met, it seemed to her that his look of recognition and greeting was not so ardent as she was accustomed to associate with his features when turned toward her. But before she could be daunted by her misgiving it vanished; for he impetuously caught her in his arms and, utterly forgetting the onlookers, kissed her until every nerve in her body was tingling in the sweeping flame of that passion which his parting caress had stirred to vague but troublesome restlessness. And she, too, forgot the crowd, and shyly, proudly gave as well as received; so there began to vibrate between them the spark that clears brains and hearts of the fogs and vapors and keeps them clear. And it was not a problem in psychology that was revealed to those admiring and envying spectators in the brilliant September sunshine, but a man and a woman in love in the way that has been "the way of a man with a maid" from the beginning; in love, and each looking worthy of the other's love—he handsome in his blue serge, she beautiful in a light-brown fall dress with pale-gold facings, and the fluffy, feathery boa close round her fair young face. Civilization has changed methods, but not essentials; it is still not what goes on in the minds of a man and woman that counts, but what goes on in their hearts and nerves.

The old doctor did not in the least mind the momentary neglect of himself. He had always assumed that his son and Del loved each other, there being every reason why they should and no reason why they shouldn't; he saw only the natural and the expected in this outburst which astonished and somewhat embarrassed them with the partial return of the self-consciousness that had been their curse. He beamed on them from eyes undimmed by half a century of toil, as bright under his shaggy white brows as the first spring flowers among the snows. As soon as he had Dory's hand and his apparent attention, he said: "I hope you've been getting your address ready on the train, as I suggested in my telegram."

"I've got it in my bag," replied Dory.

In the phaeton Del sat between them and drove. Dory forgot the honors he had come home to receive; he had eyes and thoughts only for her, was impatient to be alone with her, to reassure himself of the meaning of the blushes that tinted her smooth white skin and the shy glances that stole toward him from the violet eyes under those long lashes of hers. Dr. Hargrave resumed the subject that was to him paramount. "You see, Theodore, your steamer's being nearly two days late brings you home just a day before the installation. You'll be delivering your address at eleven to-morrow morning."

"So I shall," said Dory absently.

"You say it's ready. Hadn't you better let me get it typewritten for you?"

Dory opened the bag at his feet, gave his father a roll of paper. "Please look it over, and make any changes you like."

Dr. Hargrave began the reading then and there. He had not finished the first paragraph when Dory interrupted with, "Why, Del, you're passing our turning."

Del grew crimson. The doctor, without looking up or taking his mind off the address, said: "Adelaide gave up Mrs. Dorsey's house several weeks ago. You are living with us."

Dory glanced at her quickly and away. She said nothing. "He'll understand," thought she—and she was right.

Only those who have had experience of the older generation out West would have suspected the pride, the affection, the delight hiding behind Martha Skeffington's prim and formal welcome, or that it was not indifference but the unfailing instinct of a tender heart that made her say, after a very few minutes: "Adelaide, don't you think Dory'd like to look at the rooms?"

Del led the way, Dory several feet behind her—deliberately, lest he should take that long, slender form of hers in his arms that he might again feel her bosom swelling and fluttering against him, and her fine, thick, luminous hair caressing his temple and his cheek. Miss Skeffington had given them the three large rooms on the second floor—the two Dory used to have and one more for Del. As he followed Del into the sitting room he saw that there had been changes, but he could not note them. She was not looking at him; she seemed to be in a dream, or walking with the slow deliberate steps one takes in an unfamiliar and perilous path.

"That is still your bedroom," said she, indicating one of the doors. "A stationary stand has been put in. Perhaps you'd like to freshen up a bit."

"A stationary stand," he repeated, as if somewhat dazed before this practical detail. "Yes—I think so."

She hesitated, went into her room, not quite closing the door behind her. He stared at it with a baffled look. "And," he was thinking, "I imagined I had trained myself to indifference." An object near the window caught his eye—a table at which he could work standing. He recalled that he had seen its like in a big furniture display at Paris when they were there together, and that he had said he would get one for himself some day. This hint that there might be more than mere matter in those surroundings set his eyes to roving. That revolving bookcase by the desk, the circular kind he had always wanted, and in it the books he liked to have at hand—Montaigne and Don Quixote, Shakespeare and Shelley and Swinburne, the Encyclopedia, the statistical yearbooks; on top, his favorites among the magazines. And the desk itself—a huge

spread of cleared surface—an enormous blotting pad, an ink well that was indeed a well—all just what he had so often longed for as he sat cramped at little desks where an attempt to work meant overflow and chaos of books and papers. And that big inlaid box—it was full of his favorite cigarettes; and the drop-light, and the green shade for the eyes, and the row of pencils sharpened as he liked them——

He knocked at her door. "Won't you come out here a moment?" cried he, putting it in that form because he had never adventured her intimate threshold.

No answer, though the door was ajar and she must have heard.

"Please come out here," he repeated.

A pause; then, in her voice, shy but resolute, the single word, "Come!"

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE DEAD THAT LIVE

ON the green oval within and opposite the entrance to the main campus of the great university there is the colossal statue of a master workman. The sculptor has done well. He does not merely show you the physical man—the mass, the strength, of bone and sinew and muscle; he reveals the man within—the big, courageous soul. Strangers often think this statue a personation of the force which in a few brief generations has erected from a wilderness our vast and splendid America. And it is that; but to Arthur and Adelaide, standing before it in a June twilight, long after the events above chronicled, it is their father—Hiram.

"How alive he seems," says his daughter.

And his son answers: "How alive he *is*!"

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